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THE
PRACTICAL WORKS
OF THE
REV. RICHARD BAXTER.

THE
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OF
THE REV. RICHARD BAXTER:

WITH
A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,
AND
A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF HIS WRITINGS,

BY THE
REV. WILLIAM ORME,

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF JOHN OWEN, D.D.;" "BIBLIOTHECA BIBLICA," ETC.

VOL. III.
IN TWENTY-THREE VOLUMES.

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THE
LAST WORK OF A BELIEVER;

HIS
PASSING PRAYER,
RECOMMENDING
HIS DEPARTING SPIRIT TO CHRIST,

TO BE
RECEIVED BY HIM.

PREPARED FOR THE FUNERAL OF

MARY THE WIDOW, FIRST OF FRANCIS CHARLTON, ESQ.,
AND AFTER OF THOMAS HANMER, ESQ.;

AND PARTLY PREACHED AT ST. MARY MAGDALEN'S CHURCH, IN MILK-STREET,
LONDON, AND NOW, AT THE DESIRE OF HER DAUGHTER
BEFORE HER DEATH, REPRINTED.

“ If any man serve me, let him follow me ; and where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.”—JOHN xii. 26.

TO THE READER.

READER,

THE person whose death did occasion this discourse was one that about five years ago removed from her ancient habitation, at Appley, in Shropshire, to Kidderminster, where she lived under my pastoral care till I was come up to London; and before she had lived there a twelvemonth (for thither she removed) she died of the fever, then very common in the city. She lived among us an example of prudence, gravity, sobriety, righteousness, piety, charity, and self-denial, and was truly what I have described her to be, and much more; for I use not to flatter the living, much less the dead. And though I had personal acquaintance with her for no longer a time than I have mentioned, yet I think it worthy the mentioning, which I understand by comparing her last years with what is said of her former time, by those that were then nearest to her, and so were at her death, that whereas (as I have said) sudden passion was the sin that she was wont much to complain of, she had not contented herself with mere complainings, but so effectually resisted them, and applied God's remedies for the healing of her nature, that the success was very much observed by those about her, and the change and cure so great herein, as was a comfort to her nearest relations that had the benefit of her converse; which I mention as a thing that shows us, 1. That even the infirmities that are found in nature and temperature of body are curable so far as they fall under the dominion of a sanctified will. 2. That even in age, when such passions usually get ground, and infirmities of mind increase with infirmities of body, yet grace can effectually do its work. 3. That to attend God in his means, for the subduing of any corruption, is not in vain. 4. That as God hath promised growth of grace, and flourishing in old age, so in his way we may expect the fulfilling of his promise. 5. That as grace increaseth, infirmities and corruptions of the soul will vanish.

This makes me call to mind that she was once so much taken with a sermon which I preached at the funeral of a holy aged woman,* and so sensibly oft recited the text itself as much affecting her—"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day," &c. (2 Cor. iv. 16, 17 :) that I am persuaded both the text itself, and the example opened (and well known) to her, did her much good.

Her work is done, her enemies are conquered, (except the remaining fruits of death upon a corrupting body, which the resurrection must conquer,) her danger, and temptations, and troubles, and fears, are at an end. She shall no more be discomfited with evil-tidings; nor no more partake with a militant church in the sorrows of her diseases or distresses. We are left within the reach of Satan's assaults and malice, and of the rage and violence which pride, and faction, and Cainish envy, and enmity to serious holiness, do ordinarily raise against Christ's followers in the world. We are left among the lying tongues of slanderous, malicious men, and dwell in a wilderness among scorpions; where the sons of Belial, like Nabal, are such that a man cannot speak to them. (1. Sam. xxv. 17.) The best of them is as a briar, the most upright sharper than a thorn hedge. (Mic. vii. 4.) "But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands; but the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron, and the staff of a spear, and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place." (2 Sam. xxiii. 6, 7.) We are left among our weak, distempered, sinful, afflicted, lamenting friends; the sight of whose calamities, and participation of their sufferings, maketh us feel the strokes that fall upon so great a number, that we are never like to be free from pain. But she is entered into the land of peace, where pride and faction are shut out; where serpentine enmity, malice, and fury, never come; where there is no Cain to envy and destroy us; no Sodomites to rage against us, and in their blindness to assault our doors; no Ahithophels to plot our ruin; no Judas to betray us; no false witnesses to accuse us; no Tertullus to paint us out as pestilent fellows, and movers of sedition among the people; no Rehum, Shimshai, or

* Good old Mrs. Doughty, sometime of Shrewsbury, who had long walked with God and longed to be with him, and was among us an excellent example of holiness, blamelessness, contempt of the world, constancy, patience, humility, and (which makes it strange) a great and constant desire to die, though she was still complaining of doubtings, and weakness of assurance.

their society, to persuade the rulers that the servants of the God of heaven are hurtful unto kings, and against their interest and honour; (Ezra iv. 9, 12, 13, 14, 22; and v. 11;) no rabble to cry "Away with them, it is not fit that they should live;" no Demas that will forsake us for the love of present things; no such contentious, censorious friends as Job's to afflict us, by adding to our afflictions; no cursed Ham to dishonour parents; no ambitious, rebellious Absalom to molest us, or to lament; no sinful, scandalous, or impatient friends to be our grief: and, which is more than all, no earthly, sinful inclinations in ourselves; no passions or infirmities; no languishings of soul; no deadness, dulness, hard-heartedness or weakness of grace; no backwardness to God, or estrangedness from him, nor fears or doubtings of his love, nor frowns of his displeasure. None of these do enter into that serene and holy region, nor ever interrupt the joy of saints.

The great work is yet upon our hands, to fight out the good fight, to finish our course, to run with patience the remainder of the race that is before us; and as we must look to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, as our great exemplar, so must we look to his saints and martyrs as our encouraging examples under him. Put the case you were now dying, (and oh, how near is it, and how sure!) what would you need most, if the day were come? That is it that you need most now. Look after it speedily while you have time. Look after it seriously, if you have the hearts of men, and sin have not turned you into idiots or blocks. What a disgrace is it to mankind, to hear men commonly at death cry out, 'Oh! for a little more time.' And 'Oh! for the opportunities of grace again.' And 'Oh! how shall I enter upon eternity thus unprepared?' as if they had never heard or known that they must die till now. Had you not a life's time to put these questions? And should you not long ago have got them satisfactorily resolved? And justly doth God give over some to that greater shame of human nature, as not to be called to their wits, even by the approach of death itself; but as they contemned everlasting life in their health, God justly leaveth them to be so sottish as to venture presumptuously with unrenewed souls upon death, and the conceit that they are of the right church, or party, or opinion; or that the priest hath absolved them, doth pass with them for the necessary preparation; and well were it for them if these would pass them currently into heaven. But, oh, what heart can

now conceive how terrible it is for a new departed soul to find itself remedilessly disappointed, and to be shut up in flames and desperation, before they would believe that they were in danger of it.

Reader, I beseech thee, as ever thou believest that thou must shortly die, retire from the crowd and noise of worldly vanity and vexation. Oh, bethink thee, how little a while thou must be here, and have use for honour, and favour, and wealth; and what it is for a soul to pass into heaven or hell, and to dwell among angels or devils for ever; and how men should live, and watch, and pray, that are near to such a change as this. Should I care what men call me (by tongue or pen)? Should I care whether I live at liberty or in prison, when I am ready to die, and have matters of infinite moment before me to take me up? Honour or dishonour, liberty or prison, are words of no sound or signification, scarce to be heard or taken notice of, to one of us that are just passing to God, and to everlasting life. The Lord have mercy upon the distracted world! How strangely doth the devil befool them in the daylight, and make them needlessly trouble themselves about many things, when one thing is needful; and heaven is talked of, (and that but heartlessly and seldom,) while fleshly provision only is the prize, the pleasure, the business of their lives. Some are diverted from their serious preparation for death by the beastly avocations of lust, and gaudiness, and meats, and drinks, and childish sports; and some by the businesses of ambition and covetousness, contriving how to feather their nests, and exercise their wills over others in the world! And some that will seem to be doing the work, are diverted as dangerously as others, by contending about formalities and ceremonies, and destroying charity and peace; rending the church, and strengthening factions, and carrying on interests hypocritically under the name of religion, till the zeal that St. James describeth, (James iii. 13, 14, &c.) having consumed all that was like to the zeal of love and holiness in themselves, proceed to consume the servants and interest of Christ about them, and to bite and devour, till their Lord come and find them in a day that they looked not for him, smiting their fellow-servants, and eating and drinking with the drunken, and cut them asunder, and appoint them their portion with the hypocrites, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. xxiv. 49—51.)

Oh, study, and preach, and hear, and pray, and live, and use

your brethren that differ from you in some opinions, as you would do if you were going to receive your doom, and as will then be most acceptable to your Lord ! The guilt of sensuality, worldliness, ambition, of uncharitableness, cruelty, and injustice, of losing time, and betraying your souls by negligence, or perfidiousness, and wilful sin, will lie heavier upon a departing soul, than now, in the drunkenness of prosperity, you can think. Christ will never receive such souls in their extremity, unless upon repentance, by faith in his blood, they are washed from this pollution. It is unspeakably terrible to die, without a confidence that Christ will receive us ; and little knows the graceless world what sincerity and simplicity in holiness is necessary to the soundness of such a confidence.

Let those that know not that they must die, or know of no life hereafter, hold on their chase of a feather, till they find what they lost their lives, and souls, and labour for. But if thou be a Christian, remember what is thy work : thou wilt not need the favour of man, nor worldly wealth, to prevail with Christ to receive thy spirit. Oh, learn thy last work before thou art put upon the doing of it ! The world of spirits, to which we are passing, doth better know than this world of fleshly, darkened sinners, the great difference between the death of a heavenly believer and of an earthly sensualist. Believe it, it is a thing possible to get that apprehension of the love of Christ, that confidence of his receiving us, and such familiar, pleasant thoughts of our entertainment by him, as shall much overcome the fears of death, and make it a welcome day to us when we shall be admitted into the celestial society : and the difference between one man's death and another's dependeth on the difference between heart and heart, life and life, preparation and unpreparedness.

If you ask me, ' How may so happy a preparation be made ? I have told you in this following discourse, and more fully elsewhere formerly. I shall add now these few directions following.

1. Follow the flattering world no further ; come off from all expectation of felicity below ; enjoy nothing under the sun, but only use it in order to your enjoyment of the real, sure delight ; take heed of being too much pleased in the creature. Have you houses, and lands, and offices, and honours, and friends, that are very pleasing to you ? Take heed, for that is the killing snare ! Shut your eyes, and wink them all into nothing ; and cast by your contrivances, and cares, and fears, and remember you have another work to do.

2. Live in communion with a suffering Christ: study well the whole life and nature of his sufferings, and the reason of them, and think how desirable it is to be conformed to him. Thus, look to Jesus, that for the joy that was set before him, despised the shame, and endured the cross, and the contradiction of sinners against himself. Dwell upon this example, that the image of a humbled, suffering Christ being deeply imprinted on thy mind, may draw thy heart into a more just relish of a mortified state. Sure he is no good Christian that thinks it not better to live as Christ did, (in holy poverty and sufferings in the world,) than as Croesus, or Cæsar, or any such worldling and self-pleaser lived. Die daily by following Jesus with your cross, and when you have a while suffered with him, he will make you perfect, and receive your spirits, and you shall reign with him: it wonderfully prepareth for a comfortable death to live in the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ. He is most likely to die quietly, patiently, and joyfully, that can first be poor, be neglected, be scorned, be wronged, be slandered, be imprisoned, quietly, patiently, and joyfully. If you were but at Jerusalem, you would, with some love and pleasure, go up Mount Olivet, and think ‘Christ went this very way.’ You would love to see the place where he was born, the way which he went when he carried his cross, the holy grave where he was buried, (where there is a temple which pilgrims use to visit, from whence they use to bring the mark as a pleasing badge of honour,) but how much more of Christ is there in our suffering for his cause and truth, and in following him in a mortified, self-denying life, than in following him in the path that he hath trodden upon earth? His enemies saw his cross, his grave; his mother, his person. This did not heal their sinful souls, and make them happy; but the cross that he calleth us to bear is a life of suffering for righteousness’ sake; in which he commandeth us to rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, because our reward is great in heaven, though all manner of evil be spoken of us falsely by men on earth. (Matt. v. 11, 12.) This is called a being partakers of Christ’s sufferings, in which we are commanded to rejoice, “that, when his glory shall be revealed, we may be glad also with exceeding joy.” (1 Peter iv. 13.) And as “the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by Christ.” (2 Cor. i. 5.) Till we come up to a life of willing mortification, and pleased, contented suffering with Christ, we are in the lower form of his school, and, as children, shall tremble

at that which should not cause our terror; and, through misapprehensions of the case of a departing soul, shall be afraid of that which should be our joy. I am not such an enemy to the esteem of relics, but if one could show me the very stocks that Paul and Silas sat in when they sung psalms in their imprisonment, (Acts. xvi.) I could be contented to be put (for the like cause) into the same stocks, with a special willingness and pleasure, how much more should we be willing to be conformed to our suffering Lord in a spirit and life of true mortification?

3. Hold communion also with his suffering members: desire not to dwell in the tents of wickedness, nor to be planted among them that flourish for time, that they may be destroyed for ever. (Psalm xcii. 6, 7.) I had rather have Bradford's heart and faggot than Bonner's bishopric. It was holy Stephen, and not those that stoned him, that saw heaven opened, and the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of God, (Acts vii. 56,) and that could joyfully say, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." He liveth not by faith (though he may be a hanger-on that keepeth up some profession for fear of being damned) who chooseth not rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, and esteemeth not the very reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the world, as having respect to the recompense of reward. (Heb. xi. 25, 26.)

4. Live as if heaven were open to your sight, and then doat upon the delights of worldlings if you can. Then love a life of fleshly ease and honour, better than to be with Christ, if you can. But of this I have spoken at large in other writings.

Christian, make it the study and business of thy life to learn to do thy last work well, that work which must be done but once; that so death, which transmits unholy souls into utter darkness and despair, may deliver thy spirit into thy Redeemer's hands, to be received to his glory, according to that blessed promise, John xii. 26. And while I am in the flesh beg the same mercy for

Thy brother and companion in tribulation,
And in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ,
RICHARD BAXTER.

London, Jan. 31, 1661.

A BELIEVER'S LAST WORK.

ACTS vii. 59.

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

THE birth of nature, and the new birth of grace, in their measure resemble the death of saints, which is the birth of glory. It is a bitter-sweet day, a day that is mixed of sorrow and joy, when nature must quit its familiar guest, and yield to any of these changes. Our natural birth is not without the throes, and pain, and groanings of the mother, though it transmit the child into a more large, and lightsome, and desirable habitation. Our spiritual birth is not without its humbling and heart-piercing sorrows ; and when we are brought out of darkness into the marvellous light, we leave our old companions in displeasure, whom we forsake, and our flesh repining at the loss of its sensual delights. And our passage into glory is not without those pangs and fears which must needs be the attendants of a pained body, ready to be dissolved, and a soul that is going through so strait a door into a strange, though a most blessed place ; and it leaveth our lamenting friends behind, that feel their loss, and would longer have enjoyed our company, and see not (though they believe) the glory of the departed soul. And this is our case that are brought hither this day, by an act of Providence sad to us, though joyous to our departed friend ; by a voice that hath called her into glory, and called us into this mourning plight : even us that rejoice in the thoughts of her felicity, and are not so cruel as to wish her again into this corruptible flesh, and calamitous world, from the glorious presence of the Lord ; and yet should have kept her longer from it, for our own and others' sakes, if our wisdom had been fit to rule, or our wills to be fulfilled, or if our prayers must have been answered, according to the measure of our failing apprehensions, or precipitant desires. But folly must submit to the

incomprehensible wisdom, and the desire of the creature must stoop to the will of the Creator. The interest of Christ must be preferred when he calleth for his own, and our temporary interest must give place : flesh must be silent and not contend, and dust must not dare to question God ; he knoweth best when his fruit is ripe, and though he will allow our moderate sorrows, he will not so much damnify his saints as to detain them with us from their joyful rest till we are content to let them go.

Thus also did blessed Stephen depart from glory to glory ; from a distant sight of the glory of God, and of Jesus standing at his right hand, into the immediate presence and fruition of that glory. But yet he must pass the narrow port ; enraged malice must stone him till he die, and he must undergo the pains of martyrdom before he reach to the glory which he had seen. And when he was arrived in safety, he leaveth his brethren scattered in the storm, and devout men make great lamentation at his burial. (Acts viii. 2.) Though it is probable by the ordinary acceptation of the word *ἄνδρες ἐύλαβεῖς*, that they were not professed Christians, but devout proselytes, (such as Cornelius and the Æthiopian eunuch were,) that buried and thus lamented Stephen, as knowing him to be an excellent person, cruelly murdered by the raging Jews, yet their example, in a case not culpable, but commendable, may be imitated by believers, upon condition that, with our sense of the excellency of the persons, and of our loss by their removal, we exceed them that had but a darker revelation in our joyful sense of the felicity of the translated souls.

The occasion of the death of this holy man was partly that he surpassed others, as being full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost ; and partly that he plainly rebuked the blind and furious persecuting zeal of the Jews, and bore a most resolute testimony of Christ. It is an ill time when men must suffer because they are good, and deserve not suffering, but reward ; and they are an unhappy people that have no more grace or wit but to fight against heaven, and set themselves under the strokes of God's severest justice, by persecuting them that are dear to Christ, and faithfully perform their duty. It is no strange thing for the zeal and interest of a faction to make men mad ; so mad as implacably to rage against the offspring of heaven, and to hate men because they are faithful to their great Master, and because they are against their faction ; so mad as to think that

the interest of their cause requireth them to destroy the best with the greatest malice, because they stand most in their way; and to forget that Christ, the revenger of his elect, doth take all as done to him that is done to them; so mad as to forget all the terrible threatenings of God, and terrible instances of his avenging justice against the enemies of his servants, whom he taketh as his own, and to ruin their own reputations by seeking to defame the upright, whose names God is engaged to honour, and whose righteousness shall shine forth as the sun, when foolish malignity hath done its worst. When Christ had pleaded his cause effectually with Saul, that was one of the persecutors of Stephen, he maketh him confess that he was *περισσῶς ἐμμανόβμενος*, exceedingly, excessively, or beyond measure mad against the Christians.

But this blessed protomartyr, in despite of malice, doth safely and joyfully pass through all their rage to heaven. By killing him they make him more than conqueror, and send him to receive his crown. And he shuts up all the action of his life in imitation of his suffering Lord with a twofold request to heaven, the one for himself that his spirit may be received, the other for his persecutors, that this sin may not be laid to their charge; (Acts vii. 59, 60;) for so you may find Christ did before him, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Luke xxiii. 34, 46.) Only Christ directeth his prayer immediately to the Father, and Stephen to Christ, as being one that had a mediator, when Christ had none, as needing none, and being now bearing witness, by his suffering, to Christ, and therefore it was seasonable to direct his prayer to him, but especially because it was an act of mediation that he petitioneth for, and therefore directeth his petition to the mediator.

This first request of this dying saint, which I have chosen to handle, as suitable and seasonable for our instruction at this time, in a few words containeth not a few exceeding useful, wholesome truths.

As, I. It is here plainly intimated that Jesus Christ is exalted in glory, in that he hath power to receive departed souls.

II. That Christ is to be prayed to, and that it is not our duty to direct all our prayers only to the Father. Especially those things that belong to the office of the mediator, as interceding for us in the heavens, must be requested of the mediator. And those things which belong to the Father to give for the sake of

the mediator, must be asked of the Father for his sake. I cannot now stay to tell you in particular what belongeth to the one, and what unto the other.

III. That man hath a spirit as well as a body; of which more anon.

IV. That this spirit dieth not with the body (unless you will call a mere separation a dying.)

V. That Christ doth receive the spirits of his saints when they are separated from the body.

VI. That a dying Christian may confidently and comfortably commend his spirit to Christ, to be received of him.

VII. That prayer in general, and this prayer in special, 'That Christ will receive our departing souls,' is a most suitable conclusion of all the actions of a Christian's life.

The first and second of these doctrines, offered us by this text, I shall pass by.

The third is not questioned by any that knoweth himself to be a man: but that we may understand it, and the rest, we must consider what the word "spirit" doth here signify. By "spirit," here can be meant nothing but the rational soul, which is the principal constitutive part of the man. For though the word do sometimes signify the wind or breath, and sometimes the moral and intellectual qualifications, and have divers other senses, I need not stay to prove that it is not here so taken. Stephen prayeth not to Christ to receive his breath, his graces, or the Holy Ghost, but to receive his rational, immortal soul.

It is not only the soul, but God himself, that is called "a Spirit:" and though the name be fetched from lower things, that is because that we have no adequate positive conception of God or spirits, so we can have no adequate proper names for them, but must take up with borrowed names, as answerable to our notions.

Sometimes the word spirit (as Heb. iv. 12, &c.) is distinguished from the soul; and then it either signifieth the superior faculties in the same soul, or the same soul as elevated by grace.

Do you ask, 'What is the soul?' You may also ask, 'What a man is?' And it is pity that a man should not know what a man is. It is our intellectual nature, containing also the sensitive and vegetative. The principal or first act, by which we live, and feel, and understand, and freely will. The acts tell you what the faculties or powers are, and so what the soul is. If you know what intellection, or reason and free-will are, you

may know what it is to have a spiritual nature, essentially containing the power of reasoning and willing. It is thy soul by which thou art thinking and asking what a soul is; and as he that reasoneth to prove that man hath no reason, doth prove that he hath reason by reasoning against it; so he that reasoneth to prove that he hath no soul, doth thereby prove that he hath a reasonable (though abused) soul.

Yet there are some so blind as to question whether they have souls, because they see them not; whereas if they could see them with eyes of flesh they were no souls, for spirits are invisible. They see not the air or wind, and yet they know that air or wind there is. They see not God or angels, and yet they are fools indeed if they doubt whether there be a God and angels. If they see not their eyes, yet they know that they have eyes, because with those eyes they see other things. And if they know not directly and intuitively that they have rational souls, they might know it by their knowing other things, which without such souls cannot be known. It is just with God that those that live as carnally, and brutishly, and negligently, as if they had no souls to use or care for, should at last be given up to question whether they have souls, or no.

O woful fall! depraved nature! O miserable men, that have so far departed from God, as to deny both themselves and God! or to question whether God be God, and man be man. Return to God, and thou wilt come to thyself. Forget not, man, thy noble nature, thy chiefest part: think not that thou art only shell, because thou seest not through the shell. It is souls that converse by the bodies while they are in flesh. It is thy soul that I am speaking to, and thy soul that understandeth me. When thy soul is gone I will speak to thee no more. It is thy soul that is the workmanship of God by an immediate or special way of fabrication. "The souls which I have made." (Isa. lvii. 16.) "He breathed into man the breath of life, and he became a living soul." (Gen. ii. 7.) It is thy soul that is said to be made after God's image; in that thou art ennobled with a capacious understanding and free-will; and it is thy soul that is the immediate subject of his moral image, even spiritual wisdom, righteousness, and holiness. God hath not hands, and feet, and other members, as thy body hath. How noble a nature is that which is capable of knowing not only all things in the world, (in its measure), but God himself, and the things of the world that is to come; and capable of loving and enjoying God, and of

seeking and serving him in order to that enjoyment ! Christ thought not basely of a soul that redeemed souls at such a price, when he made his soul an offering for sin. (Isa. liii. 10.) Were it not for our immortal souls would God ever honour us with such relations to him as to be his children ? (For he is first the Father of spirits, (Heb. xii. 9,) and then the Father of saints.) Should we be called the spouse and the members of Christ ? would he be at so much cost upon us ? should angels attend us as ministering spirits, if we had not spirits fit to minister to God ? Would the Spirit of God himself dwell in us, and quicken, and beautify us with his grace ? should a world of creatures (whose corporeal substance seems as excellent as ours) attend and serve us, if we were but an ingenious sort of brutes, and had not rational, immortal souls ? Should such store of mercies be provided for us ? should ministers be provided to preach, and pray, and labour for us, if we had not souls to save or lose ? “ They watch for your souls as they that must give account.” (Heb. xiii. 17.) Why should they preach in season and out of season, and suffer so much to perform their work, but that they know that “ He that winneth souls is wise,” (Prov. xi. 30,) and that “ He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, doth save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.” (Jam. v. 20.) The devil himself may tell you the worth of souls when he compasseth the earth, (Job i. 7,) and goeth about night and day to deceive them, and devour them, (1 Peter v. 8,) and yet can he make you believe that they are so worthless as to be abused to the basest drudgery, to be poisoned with sin and sensuality, to be ventured for a thing of nought ?

Oh ! sirs, have you such immortal souls, and will you sell them for a lust, for a beastly pleasure, for liberty to glut your flesh, or for the price that Judas sold his Lord for ? Is thy soul no more worth than honour, or wealth, or foolish mirth ? Is thy soul so base as not to be worth the care and labour of a holy life ? Is the world worth all thy care and labour, and shall less be called too much ado, when it is for thy precious soul ? Alas ! one would think by the careless, fleshly lives of many, that they remember not that they have souls. Have they not need, in the depth of their security, in the height of their ambition, and in the heat of fleshly lusts, to have a monitor to call to them, ‘ Remember that thou art a man, and that thou hast a soul to save or lose ?’ What thinkest thou of thy negligence and carnal life, when thou readest that so holy a man as Paul must keep under

his body, and bring it into subjection, lest he should be a cast-away after all his labours. (1 Cor. ix. 25—27.) Oh, live not as if the flesh were the man, and its pleasure your felicity, but live as those that have spirits to take care of.

Doct. IV. The spirit of man doth survive the body; it dieth not with it. It is not annihilated; it is not resolved into the essence of some common element of souls, where it loseth its specific form and name. It was still the spirit of Stephen that was received by Christ: it sleepeth not. To confute the dream of those that talk of the sleeping of souls, or any lethargic, unintelligent, or inactive state, of so excellent, capacious, and active a nature, were but to dispute with sleeping men. When we say it is immortal, we mean not that it, or any creature, hath in itself a self-supporting or self-preserving sufficiency; or that they are necessary beings, and not contingent; or primitive beings, and not derived from another by creation. We know that all the world would turn to nothing in a moment if God did but withdraw his preserving and upholding influence, and but suspend that will that doth continue them. He need not exert any positive will or act for their destruction or annihilation. Though *ejusdem est annihilare, cujus est creare*; none can annihilate but God; yet it is by a positive, efficient act of will that he createth: and by a mere cessation of the act of his preserving will he can annihilate. I mean not by any change in him, but by willing the continuance of the creature but till such a period; but yet he that will perpetuate the spirit of man, hath given it a nature (as he hath done the angels) fit to be perpetuated. A nature not guilty of composition and elementary materiality, which might subject it to corruption. So that as there is an aptitude in iron, or silver, or gold, to continue longer than grass, or flowers, or flesh; and a reason of its duration may be given *a natura rei*, from that aptitude in subordination to the will of God; so there is such an aptitude in the nature of the soul to be immortal, which God maketh use of to the accomplishment of his will for its actual perpetuity.

The heathenish Socinians, that deny the immortality of the soul, (yea, worse than heathenish, for most heathens do maintain it,) must deny it to Christ himself, as well as to his members; for he used the like recommendation of his soul to his Father when he was on the cross, as Stephen doth here to him. If "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," be words that prove not the

surviving of the spirit of Stephen; then, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," will not prove the surviving of the Spirit of Christ. And, then, what do these infidels make of Christ, who also deny his Deity; and, consequently, make him nothing but a corpse, when his body was in the grave? How then did he make good his promise to the penitent malefactor? "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." But he that said "Because I live, ye shall live also," (John xiv. 19,) did live in the Spirit, while he was put to death in the flesh; (1 Peter iii. 18;) and receiveth the spirits of his servants unto life eternal, while their flesh is rotting in the grave. This very text is so clear for this, if there were no other, it might end the controversy with all that believe the holy Scriptures.

I confess there is a sleep of souls, a metaphorical sleep in sin and in security, or else the drowsy opinions of these infidels had never found entertainment in the world; a sleep so deep that the voice of God, in the threatenings of his word, and the alarm of his judgments, and the thunder of his warnings by his most serious ministers, prevail not to awaken the most: so dead a sleep possesseth the most of the ungodly world, that they can quietly sin in the sight of God, at the entrance upon eternity, at the doors of hell, and the calls of God do not awaken them: so dead a sleep, that Scripture justly calls them dead: (Eph. ii. 1, 5;) and ministers may well call them dead, for alas, it is not our voice that can awake them; they are as dead to us: we draw back the curtains to let in the light, and show them that judgment is at hand, and use those true but terrible arguments from wrath and hell, which we are afraid should too much frighten many tender hearers, and yet they sleep on; and our loudest calls, our tears, and our entreaties, cannot awaken them. We cry to them in the name of the Lord, "Awake, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (Eph. v. 14.) This moral sleep and death of souls, which is the forerunner of everlasting death in misery, we cannot deny. But after death even this sleep shall cease; and God will awaken them with his vengeance, that would not be awaked by his grace. Then, sinner, sleep under the thoughts of sin and God's displeasure if thou canst. There is no sleeping soul in hell; there are none that are past feeling. The mortal stroke that layeth thy flesh to sleep in the dust, lets out a guilty soul into a world where there is no sleeping; where there is a light irresistible, and a terror and torment, that will keep them

waking. If God bid thee awake by the flames of justice, he will have no nay. The first sight and feeling which will surprise thee when thou hast left this flesh, will awake thee to eternity, and do more than we could do in time, and convince thee that there is no sleeping state for separated souls.

Doct. V. Christ doth receive the spirits of his saints when they leave the flesh.

Here we shall first tell you what Christ's receiving of the spirit is. The word signifieth, to take it as acceptable to himself; and it comprehendeth these particulars.

1. That Christ will not leave the new-departed soul to the will of Satan, its malicious enemy. How ready is he to receive us to perdition, if Christ refuse us, and receive us not to salvation. He that now seeketh as a roaring lion night and day, as our adversary, to devour us by deceit, will then seek to devour us by execution. How glad was he when God gave him leave but to touch the goods, and children, and body of Job. And how much more would it please his enmity to have power to torment our souls? But the soul that fled to the arms of Christ by faith in the day of trial, shall then find itself in the arms of Christ, in the moment of its entrance upon eternity. O, Christian, whether thou now feel it to thy comfort or not, thou shalt then feel it to the ravishing of thy soul, that thou didst not fly to Christ in vain, nor trust him in vain to be thy Saviour. Satan shall be for ever disappointed of his desired prey. Long wast thou combating with him; frequently and strongly wast thou tempted by him. Thou oft thoughtest it was a doubtful question, who should win the day, and whether ever thou shouldest hold out and be saved: but when thou passest from the flesh, in thy last extremity, in the end of thy greatest and most shaking fears, when Satan is ready, if he might, to carry thy soul to hell; then, even then, shalt thou find that thou hast won the day. And yet not thou, but Christ is he that hath been victorious for thee, even as when thou livedst the life of faith, it was not thou, but Christ, lived in thee. (Gal. ii. 20.) Thou mayest fear at thy departure, and leave the flesh with terror, and imagine that Satan will presently devour thee; but the experience of a moment will end thy fears, and thou shalt triumph against thy conquered foe. He that saved thee from the dominion of a tempting devil, will certainly save thee from him when he would torment thee. Here he would have us that he may sift us, and get advantage on our

weakness ; but Christ prayeth for us, and strengtheneth us, that our faith may not fail. (Luke xxii. 31.) And he that saveth us from the sin, will save us from the punishment, and from Satan's fury, as he did from his fraud.

2. Christ's receiving us, doth include his favourable entertainment and welcoming the departed soul. Poor soul, thou wast never so welcome to thy dearest friend, nor into the arms of a father, a husband, or a wife, as thou shalt be then into the presence and embracements of thy Lord. Thou hearest, and readest, and partly believest, now how he loveth us, even as his spouse and members, as his flesh and bone. (Eph. vi.) But then thou shalt feel how he loveth thee in particular. If the angels of God have joy at thy conversion, what joy will there be in heaven at thy entrance into that salvation. And sure those angels will bid thee welcome, and concur with Christ in that triumphant joy. If a returning prodigal find himself in the arms of his father's love, and welcomed home with his kisses, and his robe and feast, what welcome then may a cleaused conquered soul expect when it cometh into the presence of glorious love, and is purposely to be received with such demonstrations of love, as may be fitted to magnify the love of God, which exceedeth all the love of man, as omnipotency doth exceed our impotency, and therefore will exceed it in the effects. Though thou hast questioned here in the dark, whether thou wert welcome to Christ when thou camest to him in prayer, or when thou camest to his holy table, yet then doubt of thy welcome if thou canst.

O had we but one moment's sense of the delights of the embraced soul that is newly received by Christ into his kingdom, it would make us think we were in heaven already, and transport us more than the disciples that saw the transfiguration of Christ ; and make us say, in comparing this with all the glory of the world, " Master, it is good for us to be here ;" but in consideration of the full, to say, ' It is better to be there ;' but it must not be : earth must not be so happy as to have a moment's sense of the unconceivable pleasures of the received soul ; that is the reward and crown, and therefore not fit for us here in our conflict.

But low things may, by dark resemblance, a little help us to conceive of something that is like them in a low degree. How would you receive your son, or husband, the next day after some bloody fight, where he had escaped with the victory ? Or your

child, or friend, that arrived safely after a long and a dangerous voyage? Would you not run and meet him, and with joy embrace him, if he had been many years absent, and were now come home? I tell thee, poor soul, thy Saviour hath a larger heart, and another kind of love than thou, and other reasons of greater force to move him to bid thee welcome into his presence.

3. Christ's receiving the departed soul includeth the state of blessedness into which he doth receive it. If you ask what that is, I answer it is unto himself, to be with him where he is, and that in general is full of comfort, if there were no more, for we know that Christ is in no ill place; he is glorified at the "right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. i. 3.) And that the souls of the righteous, and at last their bodies, are received to himself, he often telleth us: "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be." (John xii. 26.) "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." (John xiv. 2, 3.) And, in the mean time, when we once are absent from the body, we are present with the Lord, (2 Cor. v. 8,) and that is in "the building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (Verse 1.) Paul, therefore, desired "to depart, and to be with Christ" as being far better; (Phil. i. 23;) and Christ promised the converted thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.) And our state after the resurrection hath the same description, "And so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. iv. 17.) And what it shall be he declareth himself, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." (John xvii. 24.) The soul of Lazarus (Luke xvi.) was received into Abraham's bosom, where he is said to be comforted. The heavens receive Christ, (Acts iii. 21,) and therefore the heavens receive the spirits that go to him, even the spirits of the just made perfect; (Heb. xii. 23;) that is, that are crowned with Christ in glory, and freed from the imperfections and evils of this life. And so that is plain, though some would pervert it, that "whether we wake or sleep, we may live together with him." (1 Thess. v. 10.) Not whether we wake to righteousness, or sleep in sin, for such sleepers live not with him; nor whether we wake by solicitude, or sleep in security; nor whether we naturally wake or sleep

only, but whether we live, or die, and so our bodies sleep in death, yet we live together with him. In a word, Christ will receive us into a participation of his joy and glory; into a joy as great as our nature shall be capable of, and more than we can now desire, and that the largest heart on earth can justly conceive of or comprehend. And because all this tells you but to the ear, stay yet but a little while, and experimental sight and feeling shall tell you what this receiving is, even when we receive the kingdom that cannot be moved, (Heb. xii. 28,) and when we receive the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls. (1 Peter i. 9.)

Doct. VI. A dying Christian may confidently and comfortably commend his spirit to Christ, to be received by him.

Though he have formerly been a grievous sinner, though at the present he be frail and faulty, though he be weak in faith, and love, and duty, though his body by sickness be become unfit to serve his soul, and as to present sensibility, activity, or joy, he seem to be past the best, or to be nothing, though the tempter would aggravate his sins, and weakness, and dulness to his discouragement, yet he may, he must, with confidence recommend his spirit to Christ to be received by him.

O learn his doctrine, Christians, that you may use it in the hour of your last distress. The hour is near; the distress will be the greatest that ever you were in. As well as we seem now while we are hearing this, our turn is nigh. The midwife is not so necessary to the life of the child that receiveth it into the world, as Christ's receiving will be then to our everlasting life. To say over heartlessly these words, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," will be no more than a dead-hearted hypocrite may do. Such formal lip-service in life or at death doth profit nothing to salvation; now make such necessary preparation, that at death you may have well-grounded confidence that Jesus Christ will receive your spirits.

1. And first, let me bring this to the carnal, unprepared sinner.

Poor sinner, what thoughts hast thou of thy dying hour, and of thy departing soul! I wonder at thee what thoughts thou hast of them, that thou canst sin so boldly, and live so carelessly, and talk or hear of the life to come so senselessly as thou dost! Thou mightest well think I wronged thee, if I took thee to be such a brute as not to know that thou must die. Thy soul that brought thy body hither, that causeth it now to

hear and understand, that carrieth it up and down the world, must very shortly be required of thee, and must seek another habitation. What thoughts hast thou of thy departing soul? Will Christ receive it? Hast thou made sure of that? Or hast thou made it thy principal care and business to make sure! Oh, what doth intoxicate the brains of sensual, worldly men, that they drown themselves in the cares of this life, and ride and run for transitory riches, and live upon the smoke of honour and applause, and never soberly and seriously bethink them whether Christ will receive their departed souls! That they can fill their minds with other thoughts, and fill their mouths with other talk, and consume their time in other inconsiderable employments, and take no more care, and spend no more thoughts, and words, and time about the entertainment of their departing souls! When they are even ready to be gone, and stand, as it were, on tiptoe; when fevers, and consumptions, and many hundred diseases are all abroad so busily distributing their summonses, and when the gates of death have so many passengers crowding in, and souls are making such haste away, will you not consider what shall become of yours? Will you say that you hope well, and you must venture? If God had appointed you nothing to do to prepare for your safe passage and entertainment with Christ, you might then take up with such an answer; but it is a mad adventure to leave all undone that is necessary to your salvation, and then to say, you 'must put it to the venture.' If you die in an unrenewed and unjustified state, it is past all venture, for it is certain that Christ will not receive you. You may talk of hoping, but it is not a matter to be hoped for. Hope that God will make good every word of his promise, and spare not; but there is no more hope that Christ will receive the souls of any but of his members, than there is that he will prove a liar. He never promised to save any others, and that is not all, but he hath declared and professed frequently that he will not. And you are no believers if you will not believe him; and if you believe him, you must believe that the unbelievers, the unregenerate, the unholy, and the workèrs of iniquity, shall not be received into the kingdom of heaven, for he hath professed it. (John iii. 3, 36; Heb. xii. 14; Matt. vii. 23.)

If Christ would receive the souls of all, your venture then had reason for it; or if he had left it as a thing that depended only on his unrevealed will, and not on any preparations of our own, we might then have quit ourselves of the care, and cast

it all on him, as being his part, and none of ours. But it is not so, I hope I need not tell you that it is not so. Believe it, the question must be now resolved, and resolved by yourselves, whether Christ shall receive your departed souls, or cast them off as firebrands for hell. He hath made the law, and set down the terms already to which he will unalterably stand, and which we must trust to. It is now that you must labour to be accepted of him, "for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. v. 9, 10.) Oh, sirs, this is the reason of our importunity with you. "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men," saith the apostle in the next words. (Verse 11.) We know that the sentence will be just, and that it is now in your own hands what judgment then shall pass upon you. And if just now your souls were passing hence, before you went from the place you sit in, would you think any care could be too great to make sure that they should go to happiness. O that you would consider how much it is your own work, and how much it resteth on yourselves what Christ shall then do with you! Then you will cry to him for mercy, 'O cast not away a miserable soul! Lord, receive me into thy kingdom!' But now he must entreat you to be saved, and to be the people that he may then receive, and you will not hear him. And if you will not hear him when he calleth on you, and beseecheth you to repent and to prepare, as sure as Christ is Christ, he will not hear you when you cry and call for mercy too late in your extremity. Read Prov. i., and you will see this is true. It is you that are to be entreated that Christ may receive you, for the unwillingness and backwardness is on your part. You are now poisoning your souls by sin, and when we cannot entreat you either to forbear, or to take the vomit of repentance, yet, when you are gasping and dying of your own wilful self-murder, you will then cry to Christ, and think he must receive you upon terms inconsistent with his justice, holiness, and truth. But flatter not yourselves, it will not be. This is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation. Refuse it now, and it is lost for ever. O sirs, if this were the hour, and you were presently to be received or refused, would you blame me to cry and call to you with all the fervour of my soul, if I knew that it were in your own choice whether you would go to heaven or hell? Why now it is in your choice. Life and death are

set before you. Christ will receive you if you will but come within the capacity of his acceptance. If you will not, there will then be no remedy. It is a doleful thing to observe how Satan doth bewitch poor sinners. That when time is gone, and the door of mercy is shut against them, they would think no cries too loud for mercy, and no importunity too great. For Christ telleth us, that then they will cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us." (Matt. xxv. 10, 11.) And yet now, when the door stands open, no arguments, no earnestness, no tears, can entreat them to enter in; then there is not the most senseless sinner of you all but would cry more strongly than Esau for the blessing, when his tears could find no place for repentance. (Heb. xii. 16, 17.) 'Lord, receive a miserable soul! O whither shall I go if thou receive me not! I must else be tormented in those scorching flames.' And yet now you will sell your birthright for one morsel; for a little of Judas's or Gehazi's gain, for the applause of worms, for the pleasing of your flesh that is turning to corruption, for the delights of gluttony, drunkenness, sports, or lust. There is not a man of you but would then pray more earnestly than those that you now deride for earnest praying, as if they whined, and were ridiculous. And yet now you will neither be serious in prayer, nor hear Christ or his messengers, when he maketh it his earnest request to you to come in to him that you may have life. (John v. 40.) Then you will knock when the door is shut, and cry, 'Lord, open to a miserable sinner,' and yet now you will not open unto him, when by his word and Spirit, his mercies and afflictions, he standeth at the door of your stubborn hearts, and calleth on you to repent and turn to God; now our entreaties cannot so much as bring you on your knees, or bring you to one hour's serious thoughts about the state of those souls that are so near their doom. Oh, sirs, for your souls' sake, lay by your obstinacy. Pity those souls that then you will beg of Christ to pity. Do not you damn them by your sloth and sin in the day of your visitation, and then cry in vain to Christ to save them when it is too late. Yet the door of grace is open, but how speedily will it be shut. One stroke of an apoplexy, a consumption, a fever, can quickly shut it, and then you may tear your hearts with crying, "Lord, open to us," and all in vain. O did you but see departed souls, as you see the corpse that is left behind! Did you see how they are treated at their removal from the flesh! How some are taken and others left; how some are welcomed to Christ, and others are ab-

horred, and turned over to the tormenter, and thrust out with implacable indignation and disdain, (Luke xiii. 28 ; Prov. i. 24, 26, 27,) sure you would enter into serious consideration this day, what it is that makes this difference, and why Christ so useth the one and the other, and what must be done now by the soul that would be received then. Alas ! men will do any thing but that which they should do ! Among the superstitious Papists the conceit of a deliverance from purgatory makes them bequeath their lands and moneys to priests and friars to pray for them when they are dead, and to have other men cry to Christ to receive them, and open to them, when time is past ; and yet now, in the accepted time, now when it is at your choice, and the door is open, men live as if they were past feeling, and cared not what became of them at the last, and would not be beholden to Christ to receive them, when the deceitful world hath cast them off.

And, now, beloved hearers all, I would make it my most earnest request to you, as one that knoweth we are all passing hence, and foreseeth the case of a departed soul, that you would now, without any more delay, prepare and make sure that you may be received into the everlasting habitations : and to this end, I shall more distinctly, though briefly, tell you, 1. What souls they are that Christ will receive, and what he will not ; and, consequently, what you must do to be received. 2. What considerations should stir you up to this preparation.

1. Nothing is more sure than that Christ will not receive, 1. Any unregenerate, unconverted soul, (John iii. 3, 5 ; Matt. xviii. 3,) that is, not renewed and sanctified by his Spirit. (Rom. viii. 9 ; Heb. xii. 14 ; Acts xxvi. 18.) They must have the new and heavenly nature that will ever come to heaven. Without this you are morally incapable of it. Heaven is the proper inheritance of saints. (Col. i. 12.) This heavenly nature and spirit is your earnest : if you have this you are sealed up unto salvation. (2 Cor. i. 22 ; Eph. i. 13, and iv. 30.)

2. Christ will receive none but those that make it now their work to lay up a treasure in heaven, rather than upon the earth, (Matt. vi. 20, 21,) and that seek it in the first place, (Matt. vi. 33,) and can be content to part with all to purchase it. (Matt. xiii. 44, 46 ; Luke xiv. 33, and xviii. 22.) An earthly-minded worldling is incapable of heaven in that condition. (Phil. iii. 17, 18 ; Luke xvi. 13.) You must take it for your portion, and set your hearts on it, if ever you will come thither. (Matt. vi. 21 ; Col. iii. 1—3.)

3. Christ will receive no soul at last, but such as sincerely received him as their Lord and Saviour now, and gave up themselves to him, and received his word, and yield obedience to it, and received his Spirit, and were cleansed by him from their iniquities. (John i. 11, 12; Luke xix. 27.) "That all they might be damned that believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. ii. 10, 12.) They are God's own words; be not offended at them, but believe and fear. "He hateth all the workers of iniquity," and will say to them, "Depart from me, I know you not." (Psalm v. 5; Matt. vii. 23.)

4. He will receive none but those that loved his servants, that bore his holy image, and received them according to their abilities. (Matt. xxv. 40, 41, &c.) And if he will say to those that did not entertain them, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," what will he say to those that hate and persecute them? (1 John iii. 14, and v. 2.)

5. He will receive none but those that live to him in the body, and use his gifts and talents to his service, and make it their chief business to serve, and honour, and please him in the world; (Matt. xxv. 21, 26; 2 Cor. v. 9, 15; Gal. vi. 7, 8;) and live not to the pleasing of the flesh, but have crucified it and its lusts. (Rom. viii. 1, 13; Gal. v. 24.)

Examine all these texts of Scripture, (for the matter is worthy of your study,) and you will see what souls they are that Christ will then receive, and what he will reject. You may see also what you must now be and do, if you will be then received. If you are not regenerate by the Spirit of God; (though you may be sacramentally regenerate in baptism;) if you are not justified by Christ; (though you may be absolved by a minister;) if you seek not heaven with higher estimation and resolutions than any felicity on earth, and take not God for your satisfying portion; (though you be never so religious in subserviency to a fleshly, worldly happiness;) if you receive not Christ as your only Saviour, and set him not in the throne and government of your hearts and lives; (though you may go with men for current Christians;) if you hate not sin, if you love not the holy image and children of God, and use them not accordingly; if you crucify not the flesh, and die not to the world, and deny not yourselves, and live not unto God, as making it your chief business and happiness to please him; I say, if this be not your case, as sure as you are men, if you died this hour in this condition, Christ will not own you, but turn you off with a

“Depart, ye cursed.” You may as well think of reconciling light and darkness, or persuade a man to live on the food of beasts, or the stomach to welcome deadly poison; as to think that Christ will receive an ungodly, earthly, guilty soul.

Deceive not yourselves, sinners. If God could have entertained the ungodly, and heaven could hold unholy souls, answer me, then, these two or three questions.

Quest. 1. What need Christ, then, to have shed his blood, or become a sacrifice for sin? If he could have received the ungodly, he might have done it upon cheaper rates. This feigneth him to have died to no purpose, but to bring the unsanctified to heaven, that might have been as well entertained there without his sufferings.

Quest. 2. To what use doth Christ send the Holy Ghost to sanctify his elect, or send his word and ministers to promote it, if they may come to heaven unsanctified?

Quest. 3. If the ungodly go to heaven, what use is hell for? There is no hell, if this be true. But you will quickly find that to be too good news to the ungodly to be true.

2. In Luke xvi., Christ teacheth us our duty by the parable of the steward, that asketh himself beforehand, what he shall do when he must be no longer steward, and contriveth it so that others may receive him when he is cast off; and he applieth it to us that must now so provide, that when we fail we may be received into the everlasting habitations. This is the work that we have all to mind. We always knew that this world would fail us. O, how uncertain is your tenure of the dwellings that you now possess. Are you provided, certainly provided whither to go, and who shall receive you when your stewardship is ended, and you must needs go hence? O think of these considerations that should move you presently to provide.

1. Your cottages of earth are ready to drop down, and it is a stormy time, there are many sicknesses abroad. One blast may quickly lay them in the dust, and then the flesh that had so much care, and was thought worthy to be preferred before the soul, must be laid and left to rot in darkness, to avoid the annoyance of the living; and when you may justly look every hour when you are turned out of these dwellings that you are in, is it not time to be provided of some other?

2. Consider, if Christ should not receive thy spirit how unspeakably deplorable thy case will be. I think there is no man in all this assembly so mad, that would take all the world now

to have his soul refused then by Christ, that would professedly make and subscribe such a bargain; and yet, alas, how many are they that will be hired for a smaller price, even for the pleasure of a sin, to do that which Christ himself hath told them will cause him to refuse them? O sirs, for aught you know, before to-morrow, or within this week, you may be put to know these things by trial, and your souls may be refused or received; and wo to you that ever you were men, if Christ receive you not.

Consider, 1. If Christ receive thee not, thou hast no friend left, then, to receive thee. Thy house, and land, and riches, and reputation, are all left behind; none of them will go with thee; or, if they did, they could afford thee no relief. Thy bosom friends, thy powerful defenders, are all left behind; or, if they go before thee, or with thee, they can do nothing there, that could do so much for thee here. No minister so holy, no friend so kind, no patron so powerful, that can give thee any entertainment, if Christ refuse to entertain thee. Look to the right hand or the left, there will be none to help thee, or care for thy forsaken soul. Then thou wilt find that one Christ had been a better friend than all the great ones upon earth.

2. If Christ, then, receive not thy departed soul, the devils will receive it. I am loth to speak so terrible a word, but that it must be spoken, if you will be awaked to prevent it. He that deceived thee will then plead conquest, and claim thee as his due, that he may torment thee. And if the devil say, 'This soul is mine,' and Christ do not rescue and justify thee, but say so too, no heart is able to conceive the horror that will then overwhelm thee. Doth not the reading of the sentence make thee tremble, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" (Matt. xxv. 41.) This is that dreadful delivering up to Satan, when the soul is excommunicated from the city of God. Oh, therefore, if thou be yet unreconciled to God, agree with him quickly, while thou art here in the way, lest he deliver thee to this terrible jailor and executioner, and thou be cast into the prison of the bottomless pit: "Verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." (Matt. v. 25, 26.)

3. The greatness of the change will increase the amazement and misery of thy spirit, if Christ receive it not. To leave a world that thou wast acquainted with; a world that pleased thee, and entertained thee; a world where thou hadst long thy

business and delight, and where, wretched man, thou hadst made thy chief provision, and laid up thy treasure, this will be a sad part of the change. To enter into a world where thou art a stranger, and much worse, and see the company and the things that before thou never sawest, and to find things go there so contrary to thy expectation; to be turned, with Dives, from thy sumptuous dwelling, attendance, and fare, into a place of easeless torment, this will be a sadder part of thy change. Here the rich would have received thee, the poor would have served and flattered thee, thy friends would have comforted thee, thy playfellows would have been merry with thee. But there, alas! how the case is altered: all these have done; the table is withdrawn, the game is ended, the mirth is ceased, and now succeedeth, "Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented." (Luke xvi. 25.) Oh, dreadful change to those that made the world their home, and little dreamed, or did but dream, of such a day. Never to see this world again, unless by such reviews as will torment them: never to have sport or pleasure more; and for these to have such company, such thoughts, such work and usage, as God hath told us is in hell.

4. If Christ receive thee not, the burden of thy sins will overwhelm thee, and conscience will have no relief. Sin will not then appear in so harmless a shape as now: it will then seem a more odious or frightful thing. O, to remember these days of folly, of careless, sluggish, obstinate folly, of sottish negligence, and contempt of grace, will be a more tormenting thing than you will now believe. If such sermons and discourses as foretel it are troublesome to thee, what then will that sad experience be?

5. The wrath of an offended God will overwhelm thee. This will be thy hell. He that was so merciful in the time of mercy, will be most terrible and implacable when that time is past, and make men know that Christ and mercy are not neglected, refused, and abused at so cheap a rate, as they would needs imagine in the time of their deliration.

6. It will overwhelm the soul if Christ receive it not, to see that thou art entering upon eternity, even into a state of everlasting wo. Then thou wilt think, 'O whither am I going? What must I endure? and how long, how long? When shall my miseries have an end? and when shall I come back? and

how shall I ever be delivered?' O now what thoughts wilt thou have of the wonderful design of God in man's redemption! Now thou wilt better understand what a Saviour was worth, and how he should have been believed in, and how his gospel and his saving grace should have been entertained.

O that the Lord would now open your hearts to entertain it, that you may not then value it to your vexation, that would not value it now to your relief! Poor sinner, for the Lord's sake, and for thy soul's sake, I beg now of thee, as if it were on my knees, that thou wouldest cast away thy sinful cares and pleasures, and open thy heart, and now receive thy Saviour and his saving grace, as ever thou wouldest have him then receive thy trembling, departed soul! Turn to him now, that he may not turn thee from him then. Forsake him not for a flattering world, a little transitory, vain delight, as ever thou wouldest not then have thy departed soul forsaken by him! O delay not, man, but now, even now receive him, that thou mayest avoid so terrible a danger, and put so great a question presently out of doubt, and be able comfortably to say, 'I have received Christ, and he will receive me; if I die this night he will receive me,' then thou mayest sleep quietly, and live merrily, without any disparagement to thy reason. O yield to this request, sinner, of one that desireth thy salvation. If thou wert now departing, and I would not pray earnestly to Christ to receive thy soul, thou wouldest think I were uncharitable. Alas! it will be one of these days; and it is thee that I must entreat, and thyself must be prevailed with, or there is no hope. Christ sendeth me to thyself, and saith, that he is willing to receive thee, if now thou wilt receive him, and be sanctified and ruled by him. The matter stops at thy own regardless, wilful heart. What sayest thou? Wilt thou receive Christ now, or not? Wilt thou be a new creature, and live to God, by the principle of his Spirit, and the rule of his word, to please him here, that thou mayest live with him for ever? Wilt thou take up this resolution, and make this covenant with God this day? O give me a word of comfort, and say, thou art resolved, and wilt deliver up thyself to Christ. That which is my comfort now on thy behalf, will be ten thousand-fold more thy comfort then, when thou partakest of the benefit. And if thou grieve us now, by denying thy soul to Christ, it will be at last ten thousand-fold more thy grief. Refuse not our requests, and Christ's request now, as ever thou wouldest not have him refuse thee then, and thy requests. It is

men's turning away now from Christ that will cause Christ then to turn from them. "The turning away of the simple slayeth them, and they then eat but the fruit of their own way, and are filled with their own devices." (Prov. i. 31, 32.) "See then that ye now refuse not him that speaketh: for there is no escaping if you turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." (Heb. xii. 25.)

What would you say yourselves to the man that would not be dissuaded from setting his house on fire, and then would pray and cry importunately to God that he would keep it from being burnt? Or of the man that will not be dissuaded from taking poison, and then when it gripeth him will cry to God to save his life? Or of the man that will go to sea in a leaking, broken vessel, yea, himself will make those breaches in it that shall let the water in, and when it is sinking will cry to God to save him from being drowned? And will you do this about so great a matter as the everlasting state of your immortal souls? Will you now be worldlings, and sensualists, and ungodly, and undo yourselves, and then cry, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," at the last? What! receive an unholy spirit? Will you not knock till the door is shut? When he telleth you, that "it is not every one that will cry Lord, Lord, that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of his Father which is in heaven." (Matt. vii. 21.)

Lastly, consider with what unspeakable joy it will fill thy soul to be then received by the Lord. O what a joyful word will it be, when thou shalt hear, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." If thou wilt not have this to be thy case, thou shalt see those received to the increase of thy grief whom thou refusedst here to imitate: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and those that from east, west, north, and south, shall sit there with them, and thou thrust out." (Luke xiii. 27—29.)

I have been long in this part of my application, having to do with souls that are ready to depart, and are in so sad an unprepared state, as is not to be thought on but with great compassion; I am next to come to that part of the application which I chiefly intended to those that are the heirs of life.

2. O you that are members of Jesus Christ, receive this cordial which may corroborate your hearts against all inordinate fears of death. Let it come when it will, you may boldly recom-

mend your departing souls into the hands of Christ. Let it be by a lingering disease, or by an acute, by a natural or a violent death, at the fulness of your age, or in the flower of your youth; death can but separate the soul from flesh, but not from Christ; whether you die poor or rich, at liberty or in prison, in your native country or a foreign land, whether you be buried in the earth or cast into the sea, death shall but send your souls to Christ. Though you die under the reproach and slanders of the world, and your names be cast out among men as evil-doers, yet Christ will take your spirits to himself. Though your souls depart in fear and trembling, though they want the sense of the love of God, and doubt of pardon and peace with him, yet Christ will receive them.

I know thou wilt be ready to say, that thou art unworthy, 'Will he receive so unworthy a soul as mine?' But if thou art a member of Christ thou art worthy in him to be accepted. Thou hast a worthiness of aptitude, and Christ hath a worthiness of merit.

The day that cometh upon such at unawares that have their hearts overcharged with surfeiting, drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and as a snare surpriseth the inhabitants of the earth, shall be the day of thy great deliverance; "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke xxi. 34—36.) "They that are accounted worthy to obtain that world can die no more; for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God." (Luke xx. 35, 36.)

Object. 'O but my sins are great and many; and will Christ ever receive so ignorant, so earthly and impure a soul as mine?'

Answer. If he have freed thee from the reign of sin, by giving thee a will that would fain be fully delivered from it, and given thee a desire to be perfectly holy, he will finish the work that he hath begun; and will not bring thee defiled into heaven, but will wash thee in his blood, and separate all the remnant of corruption from thy soul, when he separateth thy soul from flesh; there needs no purgatory, but his blood and Spirit in the instant of death shall deliver thee, that he may present thee spotless to the Father.

O fear not then to trust thy soul with him that will receive it; and fear not death that can do thee no more harm. And when once thou hast overcome the fears of death, thou wilt be the more resolute in thy duty, and faithful to Christ, and above

the power of most temptations, and wilt not fear the face of man, when death is the worst that man can bring thee to. It is true, death is dreadful; but it is as true that the arms of Christ are joyful. It is an unpleasant thing to leave the bodies of our friends in the earth; but it is unspeakable pleasure to their souls to be received into the heavenly society by Christ.

And how confidently, quietly, and comfortably you may commend your departing spirits to be received by Christ, be informed by these considerations following.

1. Your spirits are Christ's own; and may you not trust him with his own? as they are his by the title of creation, "All souls are mine, saith the Lord;" (Ezek. xviii. 4;) so also by the title of redemption, "We are not our own, we are bought with a price." (1 Cor. vi. 19.)

Say therefore to him, 'Lord, I am thine much more than my own; receive thine own, take care of thine own. Thou drewest me to consent to thy gracious covenant, and I resigned myself and all I had to thee. And thou swarest to me, and I became thine, (Ezek. xvi. 8.) And I stand to the covenant that I made, though I have offended thee. I am sinful, but I am thine, and would not forsake thee, and change my Lord and Master for a world. O know thine own, and own my soul that hath owned thee, though it hath sinned against thee! Thy sheep know thy voice, and follow not a stranger; now know thy poor sheep, and leave them not to the devourer. Thy lambs have been preserved by thee among wolves in the world, preserve me now from the enemy of souls. I am thine, O save me, (Psalm cxix. 94,) and lose not that which is thine own!'

2. Consider that thou art his upon so dear a purchase, as that he is the more engaged to receive thee. Hath he bought thee by the price of his most precious blood, and will he cast thee off? Hath he come down on earth to seek and save thee, and will he now forsake thee? Hath he lived in flesh a life of poverty, and suffered reproach, and scorn, and buffetings, and been nailed to the cross, and put to cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" And will he now forget his love, and sufferings, and himself forsake thee after this? Did he himself on the cross commend his spirit into his Father's hands, and will he not receive thy spirit when thou at death commendest it to him? He hath known himself what it is to have a human soul separated from the body, and the body buried in a grave, and there lamented by surviving friends. And why

did he this, but that he might be fit to receive and relieve thee in the like condition? O who would not be encouraged to encounter death, and lie down in a grave, that believeth that Christ did so before him, and considereth why he went that way, and what a conquest he had made!

I know an argument from the death of Christ will not prove his love to the souls of the ungodly so as to infer that he will receive them; but it will prove his reception of believers' souls: "He that spared not his own son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32,) is an infallible argument as to believers, but not as to those that do reject him.

Say therefore to him, 'O my Lord! can it be that thou couldest come down in flesh, and be abused, and spit upon, and slandered, and crucified! That thou couldest bleed, and die, and be buried for me, and now be unwilling to receive me! That thou shouldest pay so dear for souls, and now refuse to entertain them! That thou shouldest die to save them from the devil, and now wilt leave them to his cruelty! That thou hast conquered him, and yet wilt suffer him at last to have the prey! To whom can a departing soul fly for refuge, and for entertainment, if not to thee that diedst for souls, and sufferedst thine to be separated from the flesh, that we might have all assurance of thy compassion unto ours? Thou didst openly declare upon the cross, that the reason of thy dying was to receive departed souls, when thou didst thus encourage the soul of a penitent malefactor, by telling him, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." O give the same encouragement or entertainment to this sinful soul that flieth unto thee, that trusteth in thy death and merits, and is coming to receive thy doom.'

3. Consider that Jesus Christ is full of love, and tender compassion to souls. What his tears over Lazarus compelled the Jews to say, "Behold how he loved him," (John xi. 36,) the same his incarnation, life, and death should much more stir us up to say, with greater admiration, 'Behold how he loved us.' The foregoing words, though the shortest verse in all the Bible, "Jesus wept," (verse 35,) are long enough to prove his love to Lazarus: and the Holy Ghost would not have the tears of Christ to be unknown to us, that his love may be the better known. But we have a far larger demonstration of his love; "He loved us, and gave himself for us." (Gal. ii. 20.) And by what gift could he better testify his love? "He loved us, and

washed us in his blood." (Rev. i. 5.) He loved us, as the Father loveth him. (John xv. 9.) And may we not comfortably go to him that loved us? Will love refuse us when we fly unto him?

Say then to Christ 'O thou that hast loved my soul, receive it! I commend it not unto an enemy. Can that love reject me, and cast me into hell, that so oft embraced me on earth, and hath declared itself by such ample testimonies!'

O had we but more love to Christ, we should be more sensible of his love to us, and then we should trust him, and love would make us hasten to him, and with confidence cast ourselves upon him.

4. Consider that it is the office of Christ to save souls, and to receive them, and therefore we may boldly recommend them to his hands. The Father sent him to be the Saviour of the world; (1 John iv. 14;) and he is effectively the Saviour of his body. (Eph. v. 23.) And may we not trust him in his undertaken office, that would trust a physician or any other in his office, if we judge him faithful? Yea, he is engaged by covenant to receive us: when we gave up ourselves to him, he also became ours; and we did it on this condition, that he should receive and save us. And it was the condition of his own undertaking; he drew the covenant himself and tendered it first to us, and assumed his own conditions, as he imposed ours.

Say then to him, 'My Lord, I expected but the performance of thy covenants, and the discharge of thine undertaken office: as thou hast caused me to believe in thee, and love and serve thee, and perform the conditions which thou laid'st on me, though with many sinful failings, which thou hast pardoned; so now let my soul, that hath trusted on thee, have the full experience of thy fidelity, and take me to thyself according to thy covenant. "O now remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused him to hope!" (Psalm cxix. 49.) How many precious promises hast thou left us, that we shall not be forsaken by thee, but that we shall be with thee where thou art, that we may behold thy glory! For this cause art thou the mediator of the new covenant, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. (Heb. ix. 15.) According to thy covenant, "Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and

of that which is to come." (1 Tim. iv. 8.) And when we have done thy will (notwithstanding our lamentable imperfections) we are to receive the promise. (Heb. x. 36.) O, now receive me into the kingdom which thou hast promised to them that love thee! (James i. 12.)

5. Consider how able Christ is to answer thine expectations; All power is given him in heaven and earth, (Matt. xxviii. 19,) and all things are given by the Father into his hands. (John xiii. 3.) All judgment is committed to him. (John v. 22.) It is fully in his power to receive and save thee; and Satan cannot touch thee but by his consent. Fear not, then; he is the first and last, that liveth, and was dead, and behold he liveth for evermore, amen: and hath the keys of hell and death. (Rev. i. 17, 18.)

Say then, if thou wilt, Lord, thou canst save this departing soul! Oh, say but the word, and I shall live! Lay but thy rebuke upon the destroyer, and he shall be restrained. When my Lord and dearest Saviour hath the keys, how can I be kept out of thy kingdom, or cast into the burning lake? Were it a matter of difficulty unto thee, my soul might fear lest heaven would not be opened to it; but thy love hath overcome the hinderances; and it is as easy to receive me, as to love me.

6. Consider how perfectly thy Saviour is acquainted with the place that thou art going to, and the company and employment which thou must there have; and, therefore, as there is nothing strange to him, so the ignorance and strangeness in thyself should therefore make thee fly to him, and trust to him, and recommend thy soul to him, and say, 'Lord, it would be terrible to my departing soul to go into a world that I never saw, and into a place so strange, and unto company so far above me; but that I know there is nothing strange to thee, and thou knowest it for me, and I may better trust thy knowledge than mine own. When I was a child I knew not mine own inheritance, nor what was necessary to the daily provisions for my life; but my parents knew it that cared for me. The eyes must see for all the body, and not every member see for itself. Oh, cause me as quietly and believingly to commit my soul to thee, to be possessed of the glory which thou seest and possessest, as if I had seen and possessed it myself, and let thy knowledge be my trust!

7. Consider that Christ hath provided a glorious receptacle for faithful souls, and it cannot be imagined that he will lose his

preparations, or be frustrate of his end. All that he did and suffered on earth was for this end. He therefore became the Captain of our salvation, and was made perfect through sufferings, that he might bring many sons to glory. (Heb. ii. 10.) He hath taken possession of our nature, and is himself interceding for us in the heavens. (Heb. vii. 25.) And for whom doth he provide this heavenly building, not made with hands, but for believers? If, therefore any inordinate fear surprise thee, remember what he hath said: "Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me: in my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." (John xiv. 1—3.)

Say, therefore, 'Lord, when thou hadst made this lower narrow world, thou wouldest not leave it uninhabited: for man thou madest it, and man thou placedst in it. And when thou hast prepared that more capacious glorious world for thy redeemed flock, it cannot be that thou wilt shut them out. O, therefore, receive my fearful soul, and help me to obey thy own command.' (Luke xii. 32.) Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Oh, let me hear that joyful sentence, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matt. xxv. 34.)

8. Consider that Christ hath received thy soul unto grace, and therefore he will receive it unto glory. He hath quickened us who were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in times past we walked, &c. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins and trespasses, quickened us together in Christ, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Eph. ii. 1—6.) The state of grace is the kingdom of heaven, as well as the state of glory. (Matt. iii. 2, and x. 7, and xiii. 11, 24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47.) By grace thou hast the heavenly birth and nature: we are first-born to trouble and sorrow in the world, but we are new-born to everlasting joy and pleasure. Grace maketh us heirs, and giveth us title, and therefore at death we shall have possession. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of

Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us. (1 Pet. i. 3, 4.) The great work was done in the day of thy renovation; then thou wast entered into the household of God, and made a fellow-citizen with the saints, and receivedst the Spirit of adoption. (Eph. ii. 19; Gal. iv. 6.) He gave thee life eternal, when he gave the knowledge of himself, and of his Son. (John xvii. 3.) And will he now take from thee the kingdom which he hath given thee? Thou wast once his enemy, and he hath received thee already into his favour, and reconciled thee to himself, and will he not then receive thee to his glory? (Rom. v. 8—11.) “God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For, if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” And when we have peace with God, being justified by faith, (Rom. v. 1,) why should we doubt whether he will receive us? The great impediments and cause of fear are now removed, unpardoned sin is taken away, our debt is discharged. We have a sufficient answer against all that can be alleged to the prejudice of our souls: yea, it is Christ himself that answereth for us; it is he that justifieth, who then shall condemn us? Will he not justify those at last whom he hath here justified? Or will he justify us, and yet not receive us? That were both to justify and condemn us.

Depart, then, in peace, O fearful soul; thou fallest into his hands that hath justified thee by his blood; will he deny thee the inheritance of which he himself hath made thee heir, yea, a joint-heir with himself? (Rom. viii. 17.) Will he deprive thee of thy birthright, who himself begot thee of the incorruptible seed? If he would not have received thee to glory, he would not have drawn thee to himself, and have blotted out thine iniquities, and received thee by reconciling grace. Many a time he hath received the secret petitions, complaints, and groans which thou hast poured out before him, and hath given thee access with boldness to his throne of grace, when thou couldest not have access to man; and he hath taken thee up, when man hath cast thee off. Surely he that received thee so

readily in thy distress, will not now at last repent him of his love. As Manoah's wife said, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands, neither would he have showed us all these things." (Judges xiii. 23.) He hath received thee into his church, and entertained thee with the delights and fatness of his house, (Psalm xxxvi. 8,) and bid thee welcome to his table, and feasted thee with his body and his blood, and communicated in these his quickening Spirit; and will he then disown thee, and refuse thee, when thou drawest nearer him, and art cast upon him for thy final doom? After so many receptions in the way of grace, dost thou yet doubt of his receiving thee?

9. Consider how nearly thou art related to him in this state of grace: thou art his child, and hath he not the bowels of a father? When thou didst ask bread, he was not used to give thee a stone; and will he give thee hell, when thou askest but the entertainment in heaven which he hath promised thee? Thou art his friend, (John xv. 14, 15,) and will he not receive his friends? Thou art his spouse, betrothed to him the very day when thou consentedst to his covenant; and where then shouldst thou live but with him? Thou art a member of his body, of his flesh and bone; (Eph. v. 30;) and no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: (verse 29:) as he came down in flesh to be a suitor to thee, so he caused thee to let go all for him; and will he now forsake thee? Suspect it not, but quietly resign thy soul into his hands, and say, 'Lord, take this soul that pleads relation to thee; it is the voice of thy child that crieth to thee: the name of a father, which thou hast assumed towards me, is my encouragement. When thou didst call us out of the world unto thee, thou saidst, I will receive you, and I will be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters. (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.) O our Father, which art in heaven, shut not out thy children, the children of thy love and promise. The compassion that thou hast put into man engageth him to relieve a neighbour, yea, an enemy, much more to entertain a child; our children and our friends dare trust themselves upon our kindness and fidelity, and fear not that we will reject them in their distress, or destroy them, though they do sometimes offend us; our kindness is cruelty in comparison of thine; our love deserveth not the name of love in comparison of thy most precious love. Thine is the love of God, who is love itself; (1 John iv:

8, 16;) and who is the God of love: (2 Cor. i. 13, 11:) and is answerable to thine omnipotency, omniscience, and other attributes? But ours is the love of frail and finite sinful men. As we may pray to thee to forgive us our trespasses, for we also forgive those that have trespassed against us; so we may pray to thee to receive us, though we have offended thee; for even we receive those that have offended us. Hath thy love unto thine own its breadth, and length, and height, and depth; and is it such as passeth knowledge? (Eph. iii. 17—19.) And yet canst thou exclude thine own, and shut them out that cry unto thee? Can that love, which washed me and took me home when I lay wallowing in my blood, reject me, when it hath so far recovered me? Can that love now thrust me out of heaven that lately fetched me from the gates of hell, and placed me among thy saints? “Whom thou lovest, thou lovest to the end.” (John xiii. 1.) “Thou art not as man, that thou shouldest repent.” (Num. xxiii. 19.) “With thee is no variableness, or shadow of turning.” (James i. 17.) If yesterday thou so freely lovedst me as to adopt me for thy child, thou wilt not to day refuse me, and cast me into hell. Receive, Lord Jesus, a member of thy body; a weak one, indeed, but yet a member, and needeth the more thy tenderness and compassion, who hast taught us not to cast out our infants, because they are small and weak. “We have forsaken all to cleave unto thee, that we might with thee be one flesh and spirit.” (Eph. v. 31; 1 Cor. vi. 17.) O cut not off and cast not out thy members that are engrafted into thee. “Thou hast dwelt in me here by faith, and shall I not now dwell with thee?” (Eph. iii. 17.) Thou hast prayed to the Father, that we may be one in thee, and may be with thee to behold thy glory; (John xvii. 20—24;) and wilt thou deny to receive me to that glory, who pray but for what thou hast prayed to thy Father? Death maketh no separation between thee and thy members: it dissolveth not the union of souls with thee, though it separate them from the flesh; and shall a part of thyself be rejected and condemned?’

10. Consider that Christ hath sealed thee up unto salvation and given thee the earnest of his Spirit, and therefore will certainly receive thee. (2 Cor. i. 22, and v. 5; Eph. i. 13, 14, and iv. 30.) Say, therefore, to him, ‘Behold, Lord, thy mark, thy seal, thine earnest; flesh and blood did not illuminate and renew me; thy Spirit which thou hast given me is my witness

that I am thine." (Rom. viii. 16.) And wilt thou disown and refuse the soul that thou hast sealed?'

11. Consider that he that hath given thee a heavenly mind, will certainly receive thee into heaven. If thy treasure were not there, thy heart would never have been there. (Matt. vi. 21.) Thy weak desires do show what he intends thee for; he kindled not those desires in vain. Thy love to him, (though too small) is a certain proof that he intends not to reject thee; it cannot be that God can damn, or Christ refuse a soul that doth sincerely love him: he that loveth, "dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John iv. 15, 16.) And shall he not then dwell with God for ever? God fitteth the nature of every creature to its use, and agreeable to the elements in which they dwell: and, therefore, when he gave thee the heavenly nature, (though but in weak beginnings) it showed his will to make thee an inhabitant of heaven.

— Say, therefore, to him, 'O Lord, I had never loved thee if thou hadst not begun and loved me first; I had not minded thee, or desired after thee, if thou hadst not kindled these desires; it cannot be that thy grace itself should be a deceit and misery, and intended but to tantalize us; and that thou hadst set thy servants' souls on longing for that which thou wilt never give them. Thou wouldest not have given me the wedding garment, when thou didst invite me, if thou hadst meant to keep me out: even the grain of mustard seed which thou sowedst in my heart, was a kind of promise of the happiness to which it tendeth. Indeed I have loved thee so little, that I am ashamed of myself, and confess my cold indifferency deserves thy wrath; but that I love thee, and desire thee, is thy gift, which signifieth the higher satisfying gift; though I am cold and dull, my eyes are towards thee; it is thee that I mean when I can but groan; it is long since I have bid this world away; it shall not be my home or portion; O perfect what thou hast begun; this is not the time or place of my perfection; and though my life be now hid with thee in God, when thou appearest, let me appear with thee in glory. (Col. iii. 4.) And, in the meantime, let this soul enjoy its part that appeareth before thee; give me what thou hast caused me to love, and then I shall more perfectly love thee, when my thirst is satisfied, and the water which thou hast given me shall spring up to everlasting life. (John iv. 14.)'

12. Consider also, that he that hath engaged thee to seek

first his kingdom, is engaged to give it them that do sincerely seek it. He called thee off the pursuit of vanity when thou wast following the pleasures and profits of the world; and he called thee to labour for the food that perisheth not, but endureth to everlasting life. (John vi. 27.) Since then it hath been thy care and business, (notwithstanding all thine imperfections,) to seek and serve him, to please and honour him, and so to run that thou mightest obtain.

Say, then, 'Though my sins deserve thy wrath, and nothing that I have done deserve thy favour, yet godliness hath thy promise of the life to come; and thou hast said, "That he that seeks shall find." (Matt. vii. 7, 8.) O now let me find the kingdom that I have sought, and sought by thy encouragement and help; it cannot be that any should have cause to repent of serving thee, or suffer disappointment that trusts upon thee. My labour for the world was lost and vain, but thou didst engage me to be steadfast and abound in thy work; on this account that my labour should not be in vain. (1 Cor. xv. 58.) Now give the full and final answer unto all my prayers: now that I have done the fight, and finished my course, let me find the crown of righteousness which thy mercy hath laid up. (2 Tim. iv. 8.) O crown thy graces, and with thy greatest mercies recompense and perfect thy preparatory mercies, and let me be received to thy glory, who have been guided by thy counsel. (Psalm lxxiii. 24.)'

13. Consider that Christ hath already received millions of souls, and never was unfaithful unto any. There are now with him, the spirits of the just made perfect, that in this life were imperfect as well as you. Why, then, should you not comfortably trust him with your souls? and say, 'Lord, thou art the common salvation and refuge of thy saints; both strong and weak, even all that are given thee by the Father shall come to thee, and those that come thou wilt in nowise cast out. Thousands have been entertained by thee that were unworthy in themselves, as well as I. It is few of thy members that are now on earth, in comparison of those that are with thee in heaven. Admit me, Lord, into the new Jerusalem; thou wilt have thy house to be filled; O, take my spirit into the number of those blessed ones that shall come from east, west, north, and south, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom, that we may, together with eternal joys, give thanks and praise to thee that hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.'

14. Consider that it is the will of the Father himself that we should be glorified. He, therefore, gave us to his Son, and gave his Son for us, to be our Saviour, "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." All our salvation is the product of his love. (John iii. 16, 17; Eph. ii. 4; John vi. 37, and xvi. 26, 27.) I say not that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, &c. (John xiv.) He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Say, therefore, with our dying Lord, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; by thy son who is the way, the truth, and the life, I come to thee." (John xiv. 6.) "Fulness of joy is in thy presence, and everlasting pleasures at thy right hand." (Psalm xvi. 11.) Thy love redeemed me, renewed and preserved me; O! now receive me to the fulness of thy love. This was thy will in sending thy Son, that of all that thou gavest him he should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. O let not now this soul be lost that is passing to thee through the straits of death. I had never come unto thy Son if thou hadst not drawn me, and if I had not heard and learned of thee. (John vi. 44, 45.) I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast revealed to me, a babe, an idiot, the blessed mysteries of thy kingdom. (Luke x. 21; Acts iv. 13.) O, now, as the veil of flesh must be withdrawn, and my soul be parted from this body, withdraw the veil of thy displeasure, and show thy servant the glory of thy presence: that he that hath seen thee but as in a glass, may see thee now with open face; and when my earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, let me inhabit thy building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2 Cor. v. 1.)

15. Lastly, consider that God hath designed the everlasting glory of his name, and the pleasing of his blessed will, in our salvation; and the Son must triumph in the perfection of his conquest of sin and Satan, and in the perfecting of our redemption; and, doubtless, he will not lose his Father's glory and his own. Say, then, with confidence, 'I resign my soul to thee, O Lord, who hast called and chosen me, that thou mightest make known the riches of thy glory on me, as a vessel of mercy prepared unto glory. (Rom. ix. 23.) Thou hast predestinated me to the adoption of thy child by Christ unto thyself, to the praise of the glory of thy grace, wherein thou hast made me accepted in thy beloved. (Eph. i. 5, 6, 11, 12.) Re-

ceive me now to the glory which thou hast prepared for us. (Matt. xxv. 34.) The hour is at hand, Lord, glorify thy poor adopted child, that he may for ever glorify thee. (John xvii. 1.) It is thy promise to glorify those whom thou dost justify. (Rom. viii. 30.) As "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ; (Rom. viii. 1;) so now let him present me faultless before the presence of the glory with exceeding joy; and to thee the only wise God our Saviour, be the glory, majesty, dominion, and power for evermore. Amen." (Jude ver. 23, 34.)'

What now remaineth, but that we all set ourselves to learn this sweet and necessary task, that we may joyfully perform it in the hour of our extremity, even to recommend our departing souls to Christ, with confidence that he will receive them. It is a lesson not easy to be learned; for faith is weak, and doubts and fears will easily arise, and nature will be loth to think of dying; and we that have so much offended Christ, and lived so strangely to him, and been entangled in too much familiarity with the world, shall be apt to shrink when we should joyfully trust him with our departing souls. Oh! therefore, now set yourselves to overcome these difficulties in time. You know we are all ready to depart; it is time this last important work were thoroughly learned, that our death may be both safe and comfortable.

There are divers other uses of this doctrine, that I should have urged upon you, had there been time. As, 1. If Christ will receive your departing souls, then fear not death, but long for this heavenly entertainment.

2. Then do not sin for fear of them that can but kill the body, and send the soul to Christ.

3. Then think not the righteous unhappy because they are cast off by the world; neither be too much troubled at it yourselves when it comes to be your case; but remember that Christ will not forsake you, and that none can hinder him from the receiving of your souls. No malice nor slanders can follow you so far as by defamation to make your justifier condemn you.

4. If you may trust him with your souls, then trust him with your friends, your children that you must leave behind, with all your concerns and affairs: and trust him with his gospel and his church; for they are all his own, and he will prevail to the accomplishment of his blessed pleasure.

But, 5. I shall only add that use which the sad occasion of our meeting doth bespeak. What cause have we now to mix

our sorrows for our deceased friend, with the joys of faith for her felicity? We have left the body to the earth, and that is our lawful sorrow, for it is the fruit of sin; but her spirit is received by Jesus Christ, and that must be our joy, if we will behave ourselves as true believers. If we can suffer with her, should we not rejoice also with her? And if the joy be far greater to the soul with Christ, than the ruined state of the body can be lamentable, it is but reason that our joy should be greater for her joy, than our sorrow for the dissolution of the flesh. We that should not much lament the passage of a friend beyond the seas, if it were to be advanced to a kingdom, should less lament the passage of a soul to Christ, if it were not for the remnant of our woful unbelief.

She is arrived at the everlasting rest, where the burden of corruption, the contradictions of the flesh, the molestations of the tempter, the troubles of the world, and the injuries of malicious men, are all kept out, and shall never more disturb her peace. She hath left us in these storms, who have more cause to weep for ourselves, and for our children, that have yet so much to do and suffer, and so many dangers to pass through, than for the souls that are at rest with Christ. We are capable of no higher hopes than to attain that state of blessedness which her soul possesseth; and shall we make that the matter of our lamentation as to her, which we make the matter of our hopes as to ourselves? Do we labour earnestly to come thither, and yet lament that she is there? You will say, it is not because she is clothed upon with the house from heaven, but that she is unclothed of the flesh: but is there any other passage than death into immortality? Must we not be unclothed before the garments of glory can be put on? She bemoaneth not her own dissolved body; the glorified soul can easily bear the corruption of the flesh; and if you saw but what the soul enjoyeth, you would be like-minded, and be moderate in your griefs. Love not yourselves so as to be unjust and unmerciful in your desires to your friends! Let Satan desire to keep them out of heaven, but do not you desire it. You may desire your own good, but not so as to deprive your friends of theirs; yea, of a greater good, that you may have a lesser by it. And if it be their company that you desire, in reason you should be glad that they are gone to dwell where you must dwell for ever, and therefore may for ever have their company; had they stayed on earth you would have had their company but a little while, because you must make so

short a stay yourselves. Let them therefore begin their journey before you, and grudge not that they are first at home, as long as you expect to find them there. In the mean time he that called them from you hath not left you comfortless; he is with you himself, who is better than a mother, or than ten thousand friends; when grief or negligence hindereth you from observing him, yet he is with you, and holdeth you up, and tenderly provideth for you; though turbulent passions injuriously question all his love, and cause you to give him unmannerly and unthankful words, yet still he beareth with you, and forgiveth all, and doth not forsake you for your peevishness and weakness, because you are his children, and he knoweth that you mean not to forsake him: rebuke your passions, and calm your minds; reclaim your thoughts, and cast away the bitterness of suspicious, quarrelsome unbelief, and then you may perceive the presence of your dearest friend and Lord, who is enough for you, though you had no other friend. Without him all the friends on earth would be but silly comforters, and leave you as at the gates of hell; without him all the angels and saints in heaven would never make it a heaven to you. Grieve not too much that one of your candles is put out while you have the sun; or if indeed it be not day with any of you, or the sun be clouded or eclipsed, let that rather be the matter of your grief; find out the cause, and presently submit and seek reconciliation: or if you are deprived of this light, because you are yet asleep in sin, hearken to his call, and rub your eyes: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (Eph. v. 14.)" "Knowing that it is now high time to awake out of sleep, our salvation being nearer than when we first believed; the night is far spent, the day of eternal light is at hand; cast off therefore the works of darkness, and put on all the armour of light; walk honestly and decently as in the day." (Rom. xiii. 11—14.) And whatever you do, make sure of the Friend that never dieth, and never shall be separated from you, and when you die will certainly receive the souls which you commend unto him.

And here, though contrary to my custom, I shall make some more particular mention of our deceased friend on several accounts. 1. In prosecution of this use that now we are upon, that you may see in the evidences of her happiness how little cause you have to indulge extraordinary grief on her account, and how much cause to moderate your sense of our loss with the sense of her felicity. 2. That you may have the benefit of

her example for your imitation, especially her children that are bound to observe the holy actions as well as instructions of a mother. 3. For the honour of Christ, and his grace, and his servant : for as God hath promised to honour those that honour him, (1 Sam. ii. 30,) and Christ hath said, " If any man serve me, him will my Father honour, (John xii. 26.) so I know Christ will not take it ill to be honoured in his members, and to have his ministers subserve him in so excellent a work : it is a very considerable part of the love or hatred, honour or dishonour, that Christ hath in the world, which he receiveth as he appeareth in his followers. He that will not see a cup of cold water given to one of them go unrewarded, and will tell those at the last day that did or did not visit and relieve them, that they did or did it not to him, will now expect it from me as my duty to give him the honour of his graces in his deceased servant, and I doubt not will accordingly accept it, when it is no other indeed than his own honour that is my end, and nothing but the word of truth and soberness shall be the means.

And here I shall make so great a transition as shall retain my discourse in the narrow compass of the time in which she lived near me, and under my care, and in my familiar acquaintance, omitting all the rest of her life, that none may say I speak but by hearsay of things which I am uncertain of ; and I will confine it also to those special gifts and graces in which she was eminent, that I may not take you up with a description of a Christian as such, and tell you only of that good which she held but in common with all other Christians. And if any thing that I shall say were unknown to any reader that knew her, let them know that it is because they knew her but distantly, imperfectly, or by reports ; and that my advantage of near acquaintance did give me a just assurance of what I say.

The graces which I discerned to be eminent in her, were these. 1. She was eminent in her contempt of the pride, and pomp, and pleasure, and vanity of the world ; and in her great averseness to all these she had an honest impatience of the life which is common among the rich and vain-glorious in the world : voluptuousness and sensuality, excess of drinking, cards and dice, she could not endure, whatever names of good house-keeping or seemly deportment they borrowed for a mask. In her apparel she went below the garb of others of her rank ; indeed in such plainness as did not notify her degree ; but yet in such a grave and decent habit as notified her sobriety and humility,

She was a stranger to pastimes, and no companion for time-wasters, as knowing that persons so near eternity, that have so short a life, and so great a work, have no time to spare. Accordingly, in her latter days she did, as those that grow wise by experience of the vanity of the world, retire from it, and cast it off before it cast off her : she betook herself to the society of a people that were low in the world, of humble, serious, upright lives, though such as had been wholly strangers to her ; and among these poor inferior strangers she lived in contentment and quietness ; desiring rather to converse with those that would help her to redeem the time, in prayer and edifying conference, than with those that would grieve her by consuming it on their lusts.

2. She was very prudent in her converse and affairs, (allowing for the passion of her sex and age,) and so escaped much of the inconveniences that else in so great and manifold businesses would have overwhelmed her : as “ a good man will guide his affairs with discretion,” (Psalm cxii. 5,) so “ discretion will preserve him, and understanding will keep him, to deliver him from the way of the evil man, who leaveth the paths of uprightness to walk in the way of darkness.” (Prov. ii. 11—13.)

3. She was seriously religious, without partiality, or any taint of siding or faction, or holding the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ in respect of persons ; I never heard her speak against men, or for men, as they differed in some small and tolerable things ; she impartially heard any minister that was able, and godly, and sound in the main, and could bear with the weaknesses of ministers when they were faithful ; instead of owning the names or opinions of prelatical, presbyterian, independent, or such like, she took up with the name of a Christian, and loved a Christian as a Christian, without much respect to such different tolerable opinions. Instead of troubling herself with needless scruples, and making up a religion of opinions and singularities, she studied faith and godliness, and lived upon the common certain truths, and well known duties, which have been the old and beaten way, by which the universal church of Christ hath gone to heaven in former ages.

4. She was very impartial in her judgment about particular cases, being the same in judging of the case of a child and a stranger ; and no interest of children, or other relations, could make her swerve from an equal judgment.

5. She very much preferred the spiritual welfare of her children before their temporal ; looking on the former as the true

felicity, and on the latter without it but as a pleasant, voluntary misery.

6. Since I was acquainted with her I always found her very ready to good works, according to her power. And when she hath seen a poor man come to me, that she conjectured solicited me for relief, she hath reprehended me for keeping the case to myself, and not inviting her to contribute; and I could never discern that she thought any thing so well bestowed as that which relieved the necessities of the poor that were honest and industrious.

7. She had the wonderful mercy of a man-like, Christian, patient spirit, under all afflictions that did befall her, and under the multitude of troublesome businesses, that would have even distracted an impatient mind. Though sudden anger was the sin that she much confessed herself, and therefore though she wanted patience, yet I have wondered to see her bear up with the same alacrity and quietness, when Job's messengers have brought her the tidings that would have overwhelmed an impatient soul. When law-suits and the great afflictions of her children have assaulted her like successive waves, which I feared would have borne her into the deep, if not devoured all her peace, she sustained all as if no great considerable change had been made against her, having the same God, and the same Christ, and promises, and hope, from which she fetched such real comfort and support as showed a real, serious faith.

8. She was always apt to put a good interpretation upon God's providences; like a right believer, that having the spirit of adoption, perceiveth fatherly love in all, she would not easily be persuaded that God meant her any harm; she was not apt to hearken to the enemy that accuseth God and his ways to man, as he accuseth man and his actions to God; she was none of those that are suspicious of God, and are still concluding death and ruin from all that he doth to them, and are gathering wrath from misinterpreted expressions of his love; who weep because of the smoke before they can be warmed by the fire. 'Yet God is good to Israel; and it shall go well with them that fear before him,' (Psalm lxxiii. 1; Eccles. viii. 12, 13,) were her conclusions from the sharpest providences; she expected the morning in the darkest night, and judged not of the end by the beginning; but was always confident if she could but entitle God in the case that the issue would be good. She was not a mur-

murer against God, nor one that contended with her Maker ; nor one that created calamity to herself by a self-troubling, unquiet mind ; she patiently bore what God laid upon her, and made it not heavier by the additions of uncomfortable prognostics, and misgiving or repining thoughts. She had a great confidence in God, that he was doing good to her and her's in all ; and where at present she saw any matter of grief, she much supported her soul with a belief that God would remove and overcome it in due time.

9. She was not troubled, that ever I discerned, with doubtings about her interest in Christ, and about her own justification and salvation ; but whether she reached to assurance or not, she had confident apprehensions of the love of God, and quietly reposed her soul upon his grace. Yet not secure through presumption or self-esteem ; but comforting herself in the Lord her God ; by this means she spent those hours in a cheerful performance of her duty, which many spend in fruitless self-vexation for the failings of their duty, or in mere inquiries whether they have grace or not, and others spend in wrangling, perplexed controversies about the manner or circumstances of duty : and I believe that she had more comfort from God by way of reward upon her sincere obedience, while she referred her soul to him, and rested on him, than many have that more anxiously perplexed themselves about the discerning of their holiness, when they should be studying to be more holy, that it might discover itself. And by this means she was fit for praises and thanksgiving, and spent not her life in lamentations and complaints, and made not religion seem terrible to the ignorant, that judge of it by the faces and carriage of professors. She did not represent it to the world as a morose and melancholy temper, but as the rational creature's cheerful obedience to his Maker, actuated by the sense of the wonderful love that is manifested in the Redeemer, and by the hopes of the purchased and promised felicity in the blessed sight and fruition of God. And I conjecture that her forementioned disposition to think well of God, and of his providences, together with her long and manifold experience, (the great advantage of ancient, tried Christians,) did much conduce to free her from doubtings and disquieting fears about her own sincerity and salvation ; and I confess, if her life had not been answerable to her peace and confidence, I should not have thought the better, but the worse of her condition ; no-

thing being more lamentable than to make haste to hell, through a wilful confidence that the danger is past, and that they are in the way to heaven as well as the most sanctified.

10. Lastly, I esteemed it the height of her attainment that she never discovered any inordinate fears of death, but a cheerful readiness, willingness, and desire, to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. This was her constant temper both in health and sickness, as far as I was able to observe. She would be frequently expressing how little reason she had to be desirous of longer life, and how much reason to be willing to depart. Divers times in dangerous sicknesses I have been with her, and never discerned any considerable averseness, dejectedness, or fear. Many a time I have thought how great a mercy I should esteem it if I had attained that measure of fearless willingness to lay down this flesh, as she attained. Many a one that can make light of wants, or threats, or scorns, or any ordinary troubles, cannot submit so quietly and willingly to death. Many a one that can go through the labours of religion, and contemn opposition, and easily give all they have to the poor, and bear imprisonments, banishment, or contempt, can never overcome the fears of death. So far, even the father of lies spake truth; "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." (Job ii. 4.) I took it, therefore, for a high attainment and extraordinary mercy to our deceased friend, that the King of Terrors was not terrible to her. Though I doubt not but somewhat of averseness and fear is so radicated in nature's self-preserving principle, as that it is almost inseparable, yet in her I never discerned any troublesome appearances of it. When I first came to her in the beginning of her last sickness, she suddenly passed the sentence of death upon herself, without any show of fear or trouble, when to us the disease appeared not to be great. But when the disease increased, her pains were so little, and the effect of the fever was so much in her head, that, after this, she seemed not to esteem it mortal, being not sensible of her case and danger: and so, as she lived without the fears of death, she seemed to us to die without them. God, by the nature of her disease, removing death as out of her sight, when she came to that weakness, in which else the encounter was like to have been sharper than ever it was before. And thus, in one of the weaker sex, God hath showed us that it is possible to live in holy confidence, and peace, and quietness of mind, without distressing griefs or fears, even in the

midst of a troublesome world, and of vexatious businesses, and with the afflictions of her dearest relations almost continually before her : and that our quiet or disquiet, our peace or trouble, dependeth more on our inward strength and temper than upon our outward state, occasions, or provocations : and that it is more in our hands than of any or all our friends and enemies, whether we shall have a comfortable or uncomfortable life.

What remaineth now, but that all we that survive, especially you that are her children, do follow her as she followed Christ? Though the word of God be your sufficient rule, and the example of Christ be your perfect pattern, yet as the instructions, so the example of a parent must be a weighty motive to quicken and engage you to your duty ; and will else be a great aggravation of your sin. A holy child, of unholy parents, doth no more than his necessary duty ; because whatever parents are, he hath an holy God : but an unholy child of holy parents is inexcusable in sin, and deplorably miserable, as forsaking the doctrine and pattern both of their Creator and their progenitors, whom nature engageth them to observe ; and it will be an aggravation of their deserved misery to have their parents witness against them, that they taught them, and they would not learn ; and went before them in a holy life, but they would not follow them. "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother ; for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck." (Prov. i. 8.) Read and consider Prov. xxx. 17, and xv. 20, and xxiii. 22, 25. Sins against parents have a special curse affixed to them in this life, (as the case of Ham showeth ; and the due observance and honouring of parents hath a special promise of temporal blessings, as the fifth commandment showeth. "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for it is right : honour thy father and thy mother," (which is the first commandment with promise,) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." (Eph. vi. 1—3.) The histories of all ages are so full of the instances of God's judgments, in this life, upon five sorts of sinners, as may do much to convince an atheist of the government and special providence of God, that is, upon persecutors, murderers, sacrilegers, false witnesses (especially by perjury), and abusers and dishonourers of parents. And the great honour that is due to parents when they are dead, is to give just honour to their names, and to obey their precepts, and imitate their good examples. It is the high commendation of the Rechabites,

that they strictly kept the precepts of their father, even in a thing indifferent, a mode of living ; not to drink wine, or build houses, but dwell in tents : and God annexeth this notable blessing, " Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you : Therefore thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel ; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever." (Jer. xxxvi. 6, 7, 18, 19.) But, especially in the great duties of religion, where parents do but deliver the mind of God, and use their authority to procure obedience to divine authority ; and where the matter itself is necessary to our salvation, the obligation to obedience and imitation is most indispensable ; and disobedience is an aggravated iniquity, and the notorious brand of infelicity, and prognostic of ensuing wo ; the ungodly children of godly parents being the most deplorable, unhappy, unexcusable persons in the world (if they hold on).

There is yet another doctrine that I should speak to.

Doct. 7. Prayer in general, and this prayer in particular, that Christ will receive our departing souls, is a most suitable conclusion of all the action of a Christian's life.

Prayer is the breath of a Christian's life : it is his work and highest converse, and therefore fittest to be the concluding action of his life, that it may reach the end at which he aimed. We have need of prayer all our lives, because we have need of God, and need of his manifold and continued grace. But in our last extremity we have a special need. Though sloth is apt to seize upon us, while prosperity hindereth the sense of our necessities, and health persuadeth us that time is not near its journey's end, yet it is high time to pray with doubled fervour and importunity when we see that we are near our last. When we find that we have no more time to pray, but must now speak our last for our immortal souls, and must at once say all that we have to say, and shall never have a hearing more. O, then, to be unable to pray, or to be faithless, and heartless, and hopeless, in our prayers, would be a calamity beyond expression.

Yet I know, for ordinary observation tells it us, that many truly gracious persons may accidentally be undisposed and disabled to pray when they are near to death. If the disease be such as doth disturb the brain, or take them up with violence of pain, or overwhelm the mind by perturbation of the passions, or

abuse the imagination, or notably waste and debilitate the spirits, it cannot be expected that a body thus disabled should serve the soul in this or any other duty. But still the praying habit doth remain, though a distempered body do forbid the exercise. The habitual desires of the soul are there; and it is those that are the soul of prayer.

But this should move us to pray while we have time, and while our bodies have strength, and our spirits have vigour and alacrity to serve us, seeing we are so uncertain of bodily disposition and capacity so near our end. O pray, and pray with all your hearts, before any fever or deliration overthrow your understandings or your memories, before your thoughts are all commanded to attend your pains, and before your decayed spirits fail you, and deny their necessary service to your suits, and before the apprehensions of your speedy approach to the presence of the most holy God, and your entrance upon an endless state, do amaze, confound, and overwhelm your souls with fear and perturbation. O Christians! what folly, what sin and shame is it to us, that now while we have time to pray, and leave to pray, and helps to pray, and have no such disturbing hinderances, we should yet want hearts, and have no mind, nor life and fervour for so great a work. O, pray now, lest you are unable to pray then; and if you are then hindered but by such bodily indisposedness, God will understand your habitual desires, and your groans, and take it as if you had actually prayed. Pray now, that so you may be acquainted with the God that then you must fly unto for mercy, and may not be strangers to him, or unto prayer, and that he may not find then that your prayers are but the expression of your fears, and not of your love, and are constrained, and not voluntary motions unto God; pray now in preparation to your dying prayers. Oh, what a terrible thing it is to be to learn to pray in that hour of extremity, and to have then no principle to pray by, but natural self-love, which every thief hath at the gallows! To be then without the spirit of prayer, when without it there cannot an acceptable word or groan be uttered, and when the rejection of our suits and person will be the prologue to the final judicial rejection, and will be a distress so grievous as presumptuous souls will not believe, till sad experience become their tutor. Can you imagine that you shall then at last be taught the art of acceptable prayer merely by horror, and the natural sense of pain and danger, as seamen in a storm, or a malefactor by the rack, when

in your health and leisure you will not be persuaded to the daily use of serious prayer, but number yourselves with the families that are under the wrath of the Almighty, being such as call not on his name. (Jer. x. 25 ; Psalm lxxix. 6.)

Indeed, there are many prayers must go before, or else this prayer, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," will be in vain, when you would be loth to find it so. You must first pray for renewing, sanctifying grace, for the death of sin, and the pardon of sin, for a holy life, and a heavenly mind, for obedience, patience, and perseverance, and if you obtain not these, there is no hope that Jesus Christ should receive your spirits, that never received his sanctifying Spirit.

How sad is it to observe that those that have most need of prayer, have least mind to pray, as being least sensible of their needs ! Yea, that those that are the next step to the state of devils, and have as much need of prayer as any miserable souls on earth, do yet deride it, and hate those that seriously and fervently perform it ; a man of prayer being the most common object of their malicious reproach and scorn. O miserable Cainites, that hate their brethren for offering more acceptable sacrifice than their own ! Little do they know how much of the very satanical nature is in that malice, and in those reproachful scorns. And little do they know how near they are to the curse and desperation of Cain, and with what horror they shall cry out, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." (Gen. iv. 11, 13.) If God and good men condemn you for your lip-service, and heartless devotions, and ungodly lives, will you therefore hate the holy nature and better lives of those that judge you, when you should hate your own ungodliness and hypocrisy ? Hear what God said to the leader of your sect, "Why art thou wrath ? And why is thy countenance fallen ? If thou do well, shalt thou not be accepted ? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." (Gen. iv. 6.) Have you not as much need to pray as those that you hate and reproach for praying ? Have you not as much need to be oft and earnest in prayer as they ? Must Christ himself spend whole nights in prayer, (Luke vi. 12,) and shall an ignorant, sensual, hardened sinner think he hath no need of it, though he be unconverted, unjustified, unready to die, and almost past the opportunity of praying ? O miserable men, that shortly would cry and roar in the anguish of their souls, and yet will not pray while there is time and room for prayer ! Their Judge is willing now to hear

them, and now they have nothing but hypocritical, lifeless words to speak! Praying is now a wearisome, tedious, and unpleasant thing to them, that shortly would be glad if the most heart-tearing lamentations could prevail for the crumbs and drops of that mercy which they thus depise. (Luke xvi. 24.) Of all men in the world it ill becomes one in so deep necessities and dangers to be prayerless.

But for you, Christians, that are daily exercised in this holy converse with your Maker, hold on, and grow not strange to heaven, and let not your holy desires be extinguished for want of excitation. Prayer is your ascent to heaven; your departure from a vexatious world to treat with God for your salvation. Your retirement from a world of dangers into the impregnable fortress where you are safe, and from vanity unto felicity, and from troubles unto rest, which, though you cannot come so near, nor enjoy so fully and delightfully as hereafter you shall do, yet thus do you make your approaches to it, and thus do you secure your future full fruition of it. And let them all scoff at hearty, fervent prayer as long as they will, yet prayer shall do that with God for you which health, and wealth, and dignity, and honour, and carnal pleasures, and all the world shall never do for one of them. And though they neglect and vilify it now, yet the hour is near when they will be fain to scramble and bungle at it themselves, and the face of death will better teach them the use of prayer, than our doctrine and example now can do. A departing soul will not easily be prayerless, nor easily be content with sleepy prayers, but, alas! it is not every prayer that hath some fervency from the power of fear that shall succeed. Many a thousand may perish for ever that have prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." But the soul that breatheth after Christ, and is weary of sinning, and hath long been pressing toward the mark, may receive encouragement for his last petitions, from the bent and success of all the foregoing prayers of his life. Believe it, Christians, you cannot be so ready to beg of Christ to receive your souls, as he is ready and willing to receive them. As you come praying, therefore, into the world of grace, go praying out of it into the world of glory. It is not a work that you were never used to, though you have had lamented backwardness, and coldness, and omissions. It is not to a God that you were never with before; as you know whom you have believed, so you may know to whom you pray. It is indeed a most important suit to beg for the receiving of a

departed soul, but it is put up to him to whom it properly doth belong, and to him that hath encouraged you by answering many a former prayer with that mercy which was the earnest of this, and it is to him that loveth souls much better than any soul can love itself. O live in prayer, and die in prayer, and do not, as the graceless, witless world, despise prayer while they live, and then think a 'Lord have mercy on me,' shall prove enough to pass them into heaven. Mark their statues and monuments in the churches, whether they be not made kneeling and lifting up the hands, to tell you that all will be forced to pray, or to approve of prayer, at their death, whatever they say against it in their life. O pray, and wait but a little longer, and all your danger will be past, and you are safe for ever! Keep up your hands a little longer, till you shall end your conflict with the last enemy, and shall pass from prayer to everlasting praise.

A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL OF

THAT

HOLY, PAINFUL, AND FRUITFUL MINISTER OF CHRIST,

MR. HENRY STUBBS ;

ABOUT FIFTY YEARS A SUCCESSFUL PREACHER AT BRISTOL, WELLS, CHEW,
DURSLEY, LONDON, AND DIVERS OTHER PLACES.

A S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT THE

FUNERAL OF MR. HENRY STUBBS.

ACTS xx. 24.

But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.

THIS hour being designed to such a commemoration of our deceased friend, Mr. Stubbs, as is laudably used at such men's funerals, I have chosen words of this text, which the heart and life of this holy man did so constantly express, that, doubtless, the same Spirit suggested them to blessed Paul and him. They are the profession of a full devotedness to God, in his christian and ministerial work, notwithstanding all expected difficulties and oppositions, which he resolved with unmoved patience to undergo to the joyful finishing of his course.

The witness of the Holy Ghost, with his own experience, did teach him to expect bonds and afflictions at Jerusalem, it being the ordinary entertainment which every where did abide him; but how much worse might come he knew not, but was resolutely prepared for all. The joyful finishing of his course was so desirable to him, that no suffering, though it were the loss of life itself, did seem too dear or hard a means for its accomplishment.

Here is then, first, the great and desirable prize for which nothing could be too dear. Secondly, The cheerful resolution of the apostle to go on, and part with life itself to attain it.

The first, though the words have no great difficulty, yet, as to the matter, may need to some a brief explication, viz :

1. What is meant by his "course."
2. What by his "ministry and testifying the gospel of the grace of God."
3. How this was "received of the Lord Jesus."
4. What is meant by the "finishing of his course."
5. How it was to be done "with joy."
6. Why he was not moved by foreseen sufferings, nor accounted his "life dear" to attain this end.

And for brevity, I shall now observe this method, to add the instructions and other applications, to each part of the text as I explain it.

First, the word translated "course," signifieth a race to be swiftly run : and a threefold race is here included. 1. The race of human life, which is short and uncertain ; we are not born for nothing ; nor doth God give us life, and time, and maintenance, to live in idleness, or to serve the flesh. The sun stands not still whether we sleep or wake ; our breath, our pulse are still in motion, our glass is running. And oh ! how quickly shall we see and hear, that time on earth shall be to us no more. This course will be certainly and quickly finished ; but whether "with joy," it concerns us timely to foresee. For the review of time, of precious time, and the work of time, will be no contemptible part of our everlasting work.

Secondly, the "course" (or race) of Christianity, is the necessary improvement of our time. This is not a play, nor an idle, brutish, or a jesting life. It is a great work for a self-destroying, undone sinner, to believe in a Saviour, and such a Saviour, and wholly to trust his merits, sacrifice, counsel, conduct, his powerful operations, and effectual intercessions for all our present and our future hopes. It was not a dream of war that we were listed for in our baptism under the Captain of our salvation. The resisting of temptations, the quenching of the devil's fiery darts, the denial of ourselves and forsaking friends, reputation, estate, and liberty, and life, for the sake of Christ, and renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil, for the hopes of a promised, unseen glory, is a real work. To believe in Christ and his promise of heaven, to the forsaking of all worldly hopes, is a serious business. To love God above all, and our neighbour as ourselves, and to do as we would be done by, how easily soever mentioned and pro-

fessed, are works not unworthy to be ascribed to the Spirit of the living God, and to the grace of the Almighty. He that well finisheth the christian course, shall certainly receive the crown of righteousness; and though none of these works do in the least participate in the office of the justifying sacrifice, merits, or grace of Jesus Christ, yet shall we be judged according to them; and we must live to Christ, if we will live with Christ.

Thirdly, the apostolical, ministerial course was also to be finished with joy. His call was wonderful, his office honourable, his gifts powerful, his sufferings great, his labours greater; his successes by miracles in themselves miraculous: yet all this would not have saved himself, if he had not faithfully finished his course. To begin hopefully is more common than to end happily. The sun of persecution withereth much fruit that seemed flourishing: Judas's end did more difference him from the rest of the apostles, than his beginning.

His ministry was considerable as common to all the clergy, or as apostolical. To preach the word as he commanded Timothy, to be instant in season and out of season, to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering, and doctrine, to rule well, and labour in the word and doctrine, to take heed to ourselves and unto doctrine, and continue therein, that we may save ourselves and them that hear us; to take heed to ourselves and all the flock, to hold back nothing profitable to them, but to teach them publicly, and from house to house, day and night with tears, (Acts xx.,) in meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves, if God, at any time, will give them repentance; all this is not a dream or play.

And to go over much of the world, from nation to nation, by sea and land, to preach this gospel to strangers of various languages, through all difficulties and sufferings, to confirm all by miracles, to leave this sacred doctrine infallibly in records to the church, as a rule to the end of the world, to teach men to observe all things Christ had commanded them, as well as to disciple nations, and baptize them, and to settle the orders and government of the churches according to the will of Christ, this was the extraordinary part of his ministry.

Thirdly, this ministry was received of the Lord Jesus, by an extraordinary call, a voice from heaven, and an inspiration of others that were ministerially to send him, and the special inspiration of his own soul, for apostolical qualifications. But do

not ordinary ministers also receive their office from the Lord Jesus? Yes; and though the way of their reception differ, their obligation to finish their course is divine, as well as Paul's. Christ called Paul by himself, and by inspired prophets; and he calleth us by his qualifying grace, and by his stated law, (as the king maketh mayors and bailiffs of corporations by his charters,) wherein the ordainers and electors orderly determine of the recipient persons, and the ordainers ministerially invest them; but the office, power, and obligation is directly from the law of Christ. And if any breach or interruption should be made in human ordination and tradition, the law still standeth to direct men in the choice and investiture, and to confer authority, and to oblige, as well as the Holy Ghost, to give men the necessaries thereto.

Therefore, as we receive our office from Christ, we must use it for Christ, and not for carnal self, nor as the servants of men; and we must use it according to the laws of Christ, whose laws soever shall gainsay them.

Fourthly, the finishing of Paul's course, is the bringing his work of Christianity and ministry to the desired joyful end. 1. To the end of duration; not to be weary of well-doing, nor, having put his hand to Christ's plough, to look back and repent, nor forsake the warfare in which he was engaged. "He that endureth to the end shall be saved; and in due time we shall reap if we faint not." 2. To the end of intention: 1. To do his own appointed work, that his grace being exercised and increased, he may be acceptable to God, and fit with joy to meet the Lord. 2. To call and save sinners, and to build up saints, and to gather churches unto Christ, and edify them, and leave to all ages his doctrine and example, a certain word and powerful motive. 3. To glorify Christ and God the Father in all this; not to sit warm in a reverend habit, for men to honour for the sake of the office and bare name of an apostle.

But to "testify the gospel of the grace of God," to declare the truth of it, the necessity of it, the privileges, and the honour, the great love of God, revealed by the Son of his love to sinners, and the great and manifold benefits given them in Christ, the hope of glory set before them, and the just and reasonable means and conditions of obtaining it. Thus did he, as immediately sent, and thus must we, as sent by Christ's appointed order in his law, testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Fifthly, concerning Paul's "finishing his course with joy," we must consider, 1. What joy it is that is here meant. 2. How much of this joy each faithful minister may expect. 3. And whence and on what account he may expect it.

First. The joy here meant, which Paul expected, is, 1. The joy which the nature of the work affordeth; divine, certain, great, and holy truth is pleasant to him that understandeth it, believeth it, and is exercised in the serious meditation of it. It is sweet to read, and think, and speak of the essential love of God; and of his unspeakable grace in Christ, of his free reconciliation, justification, adoption, and salvation of those that were his enemies; of the wonderful mysteries, and methods of God's love in our redemption and salvation; of the heavenly glory which we and all the elect of God shall enjoy for ever. What sweeter food or business for our minds, than such things as these.

Secondly. The success of our work is an addition to our joy. The success of it on our own souls, while they increase in holiness, and are raised to the greater knowledge of God, and greater love to him, and communion with him; and our success on others while they are brought home to God and saved. If it be pleasant to a successful physician to save men's lives, it must be more so to a successful minister of Christ, to further men's regeneration, and to save men's souls. To add more to the number of them that love the Lord Jesus, that are his members, that are enemies to sin, examples of holiness, that pray for the world, and that shall live in glory; is not this a joyful work? There is joy among the angels in heaven for every sinner that repenteth. (Luke xv. 10.) Christ rejoiceth in it, and all good men that know it rejoice in it, and shall not the minister of it then rejoice? "I rejoiced greatly," saith St. John, and "I have no greater joy." (3 John 3, 4.) "Ye are our joy and crown of rejoicing." (1 Thess. ii. 19.)

Thirdly. The honour of Christ, and the pleasing of God in our labours, and their success, is the top of all our joy. (2 Cor. v. 9; Heb. xii. 28; Eph. v. 10; Heb. xiii. 21, and xi. 5.) For to please God, and to be perfectly pleased in him, is our heavenly felicity itself.

Fourthly. It is our joy to foresee the blessed end, the everlasting, glorious reward. To live in the belief and hope of this, and to taste the love of God in Christ, which is the first-

fruits. All this is the joy in which we may hope to finish our course.

II. How much of this joy may we here expect ?

Answ. 1. So much as shall satisfy us that in our dedication of ourselves to God, we made a wise and happy choice, which we need not to repent of ; though we might easily have chosen a way more likely for wealth and pleasure to the flesh, and in which we should not have kindled the indignation of so many against us ; nor have brought on ourselves so much envy and malice, so much slanders and reproaches, to name no worse, yet experience tells us, that God taught us to choose the most pleasant life, as our deceased brother and I have truly oft told one another, that we have found it. Even when we are sorrowful, we are always rejoicing. (2 Cor. vi. 10.) When we are falsely reported of, our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, we have had our conversation in the world. (2 Cor. i. 12.) Paul and Silas could sing with their backs sore with scourging, and their feet fast in the stocks ; (Acts xvi. ;) and the apostles rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach and abuse for Christ. (Acts v. 41.) Never yet did difficulty, or suffering, much tempt me to repent that I had not chosen another calling ; much less to repent of the christian choice ; for, saith Peter, “ Whither shall we go ? Lord, thou hast the words of eternal life.” (John vi. 68.)

Secondly. We may expect so much joy as shall make the duties of Christianity and ministry easy and delightful to us, (Psalm i. 2,) and make us say, that, “ A day in his courts is better than a thousand, and to be a door-keeper in his house, than to dwell in the tents or palaces of wickedness.” And that it is good for us to draw near to God. And if at any time our diseased appetites shall lose their pleasure, we are yet sure that we have chosen the only wholesome and delicious food ; and God hath physic that can recover our appetites.

Thirdly. We may expect so much joy as shall keep us from thirsting again for the world, or longing for the forbidden pleasures of sin, and shall make even the house of mourning and godly sorrow pleasanter to us than mirth and feasting is to the ungodly, and never desire to partake of their delights.

Fourthly. We may expect so much joy as shall make all our sufferings very tolerable, especially those that are for truth and

righteousness. (Matt. v. 10—12.) Believers took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and accepted not offered deliverance; (Heb. xi.) as seeing him that is invisible, and expecting a better and more enduring substance. And that which is not joyous, but grievous at the present, will bring forth the quiet fruit of righteousness. (Heb. xii.)

Fifthly. We may expect so much joy as shall encourage us to hold out to the end, and never to forsake Christ and a holy life, as weary or as hoping for better.

Sixthly. We may expect so much joy, as shall be some foretaste of the heavenly joy, and some reward here of all our labours. Yea, some may be filled with joy and peace in believing, and have unspeakable glorious joy. (Rom. xv. 13; 1 Pet. i. 7, 8.)

Seventhly. We may expect so much as shall convince the ungodly, that we live a more comfortable life than they. Paul and Silas singing in the stocks, it is like, had some part in the conviction of the gaoler.

III. Whence, and on what accounts may we expect this joy?

Answ. This may be gathered from what is said before. 1. From the love and acceptance of the Father. 2. From the grace of the Son. 3. From the communion of the Holy Spirit. And, therefore, 1. From the goodness of our work before mentioned. 2. From the truth of the promises of God. 3. From the communion of saints. 4. From the continued protection, and other mercies, of God. 5. And from the certain hopes of glory; all which I must now but thus only name.

There is another kind of joy, which too many seek in this sacred office, thereby corrupting and profaning it; and the best things corrupted become the worst, and such men most pernicious to mankind, and these rotten pillars the greatest betrayers and enemies to the church; I mean such as Gregory Nazianzene sadly describeth in his time, even at the first general council at Constantinople; and such as Isidore Pelusiota in his Epistles to Zosimus, and some such others freely reprehendeth; and such as Gildas describeth in this land; and such as Salvian rebuketh; and such as, the canons of abundance of councils tell us, swarmed heretofore.

First. Had there not been prelates and priests, that had placed their joy in dominion over their brethren, and getting into exalted thrones, in being rich and idle, and bowed to even by princes, and mastering kings and kingdoms by cursing them

from Christ; making themselves as the soul, and princes as the body; themselves as the sun, and princes as the moon and stars, abusing *Tibi dabo claves*, and “the disciple is not above his master,” to the mastering of kings and states, as their sheep and disciples; a great part of the church history had been unwritten, or otherwise written than it is.

Secondly. Yea, far be it from any minister of Christ to expect their joy from human applause, and the multitude of followers or disciples; to be accounted a learned or a holy man, an excellent preacher, and so to have the respect and love of many.

A good name and love are not to be despised when they follow fidelity as its shadow; and as they signify the good of those that profit by the word. The Galatians would once have even pulled out their eyes for Paul; but, alas! what is the thought and breath of man, that is hastening to the dust, and to the impartial Judge? How small a matter should it be to us to be judged of many, that are so near the final judgment; and what a terrible sentence is it to the hypocrites! “Verily they have their reward.” (Matt. vi. 2.) Oh! poor and miserable reward? And yet what age hath not seen that verified, “Of your own selves shall men arise, that shall speak perverse things to draw away disciples after them.” (Acts xx. 30; Rom. xvi. 17.) Such still have been as have caused divisions and offences, contrary to apostolical doctrine, not serving the Lord Jesus, but their own bellies, being ever fleshly, worldly men, and, by good words and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple. And men that have had the form of godliness, (or the lifeless image,) but deny the power of it by wicked lives, are those from whom we must turn away.

Thirdly. Yea, and far be it from any faithful minister, or Christian, to take up his joy from a conceit that he hath commutatively merited of God, by the excellency of his faith or labours. Alas! who is sufficient for these things? And what have we that we have not received? Or who hath given to God that it may be repaid him? Or what faithful minister of Christ did ever come out of the pulpit, or from his private duty, without grief and shame that his faith and love, his skill and zeal, have been so vastly unsuitable to such great and excellent things that he was about? And yet the conscience of simplicity and godly sincerity, and God’s forgiveness, assistance, and acceptance, may set our joy above that shame and grief.

Fourthly. And now it is easy to see the reason why Paul

accounted not his life dear, nor was moved by the foresight of any sufferings, so he might but finish his course with joy.

For, first, He well knew that the end would pay for all, and no man shall ever lose by God, nor shall the most abundant labour be in vain. (1 Cor. xv. 48.) Is there any repentance in heaven for their labours or sufferings for Christ on earth? Do they think that God is in their debt? "Faith ever reckoneth that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. viii. 18.) "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, which are temporal; but at the unseen things, which are eternal." (2 Cor. iv. 16—18.)

Secondly. And Paul well knew that he and all the world were in the hands of God, and that he served such a Master as could easily preserve him as far as he saw meet, from all his enemies and sufferings. And that sufferings chosen for us by God, are better than if we had the kingdoms of the world by the gift of Satan. (Matt. iv.) Balak's words to Balaam, methinks, were words of honour and joy, "the Lord hath kept thee from honour." Oh! who would not be ambitious of being so kept from honour? The poverty and shame that is by and for God, is better than the preferment and honour of men; and the reproach of Christ is greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. And if God see it best, he knoweth how to save the righteous from trouble, and if not, to give them suffering strength, and joy.

And it is a wonder of Providence how God preserveth their names and honour, that despise honour and life for him, so that even they that killed the present prophets and just men, yet build the sepulchres of those that were killed by their fathers, and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' (Matt. xxiii. 27, 28.) The wonder of that foreigner in Henry VIII.'s days, *Deus bone quomodo hic vivunt gentes*, that saw men killed for being protestants, and for being papists, was not so contradictory a subject as the papists' usage of the saints, a stupendous instance of man's madness and Satan's methods, that at the same time can rack, and burn, and murder saints, and yet honour the relics, names, and memories of the dead

that were before them. That while they zealously cast away men's lives and treasure, to recover the holy land where saints had lived, at the same time murdered those by thousands that did most nearly imitate them; and to this day kill the living saints, under the name of schismatics or heretics, (for not obeying the king of Rome before God,) and keep holy days for the dead, and reverence their shrines and relics. What contempt did poor St. Martin undergo from his neighbour bishops, as suspected of Priscilleanism, and as an unlearned hypocrite, that was for liberty for heretics, so that he separated from their synods and communion, and yet what a name hath he left behind him even in that church whose prelates thus despised him.

Thirdly. Moreover, Paul had now tried both the ways, of being against Christ, and being for him, and was so fully convinced by experience and revelation of the evil of the one and the goodness of the other, that he had great reason to be resolved and unmoved, as knowing that no suffering can make the servants of Christ as miserable as his enemies, nor any preferment or prosperity make any one of the worldlings as happy as the poorest saint. Because he had rather be Lazarus than Dives hereafter, and had rather stand on the right hand of Christ than on the left, therefore he accordingly made his choice. For he well knew how bad a bargain it would prove to win all the world and lose his soul, and to lay up a treasure on earth, so as also to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath, and to prepare for such an even-song as Luke xii. 20, "Thou fool! this night shall they require thy soul; and then whose are the things that thou hast provided?"

Alas! what gain is it to save an estate a little while, that at death must certainly be forsaken. To save a life this year, this month, this day, that may be gone on sadder terms the next, and certainly will, ere long, be gone. Are not the bishop of Winchester, and London, Gardiner, and Bonner, now dead, as well as the martyrs whom they burnt? Are not Alexander the Third, and Innocent the Third, and Fourth, and such other persecuting Popes, now dead, as well as all the godly Christians whom they murdered? Alas! what a nothing is time, and how little difference between to-day and to-morrow, this year, and next! That which hath been, that which is, and that which will be! Shall a man part with his God, and his everlasting hopes, that he may be able to say in hell, 'I was once a lord, a man of

honour ; I had once full provision for the flesh ; I had pleasure in the way to the torment which I undergo ?'

In the expounding of these words of St. Paul, I have but given you the image, or rather the spirit, of Mr. Stubbs. Funeral praises, brought, by flatterers, into disgrace, will be here blamed by no wise man that knew the person, no more than in Nazianzene for his orations for Cyprian, Basil, and others, unless it be for the defect, which is unavoidable.

First. This faithful servant of Christ hath run his race ; what that was, and how he performed it, the county of Gloucester knoweth, and the city of Wells in Somersetshire knoweth, and this city, and this congregation partly know. And I will speak but little of him but what I know myself, and have by unquestionable testimony. His birth, parentage, and youthful life, I am not acquainted with. He was a minister of Christ about fifty years, dying at the age of seventy-three. His studies, and parts, and labours, lay not in the critical or controversial way, and as he was so happy as not to waste his time in contentious studies, so he was so humble and honest as not to trouble his auditory with such matters, nor to pretend to have studied what he had not, nor, like many proud ignorants, to boast or contend most where they know least. His soul was taken up with the great things of religion. His preaching was most on the baptismal covenant, on the articles of the creed, the Lord's prayer, and decalogue, and such necessary things which essentially constitute a Christian. I never heard him meddle with controversies in public, or in his private talks, but all, how to know God in Christ, and how to seek and serve him, and how to resist temptations and sin, and what a life we shall live with Christ for ever ; and how to live in love, righteousness, peace, and profitableness to one another, especially how to serve God entirely, and in what state we shall live with him for ever. He was the freest of most that ever I knew from that deceit of the serpent mentioned 2 Cor. xi. 3, who corrupteth men by drawing them from the simplicity which is in Christ. His breath, his life, his preaching, his prayers, his conference, his conversation, was christian simplicity and sincerity. Not as the world calleth simplicity, folly, but as it is contrary to hypocrisy, to a counterfeit zeal, to mere affectation, to a divided heart. He knew not how to dissemble nor wear a mask ; his face, his mouth, his whole conversation, laid bare his heart. While he passed by all quarrels and controversies, few quarrelled with him ; and he had

the happiness to take up head, heart, and time, with only great, sure, and necessary things.

II. Of all men that ever I knew, he seemed to me one of the most humble. His preaching, his discourse, his garb, and all his behaviour, spake pure humility, and were far from pride; never did I hear from him a word of ostentation, much less of envy at the precedence of others; he came to Christ as a teachable child, and preached as a learner, and I never heard that he strove with any. He had learned of Christ to be meek and lowly, and to make himself of no reputation, nor seek the honour that is of man. Oh! how far was he from striving to be above his brethren, or troubling the church by a proud, imperious, or turbulent spirit!

III. He was exceedingly peaceable in his principles and in his practice; never contending with opinionators, or those that cry down this and that error of their brethren, to get the reputation of being free from errors. He put not his finger into the fire of contention; nor ever, that I heard of, made himself of a sect or faction, nor preached for this party against that, except for Christ's party against the devil's. Nor did I ever hear him, in his private talk, backbite any; nor exercise the too common liberty against others, in carping at their infirmities, or making himself their judge. Had the church had no more unpeaceable pastors, we had not been in the sad condition that we are in, denying peace and concord, obstinately, to the servants of Christ, and militating, by forbidden arms, against one another. Long would it have been before he would have reviled, vexed, or hindered any true minister of Christ from preaching his gospel, or living in peace.

IV. He was an honourer of his superiors, and obedient to authority, as far as would stand with his obedience to God. I never heard that, publicly or privately, he spake a disloyal or irreverent word of the king, or others in authority. After he had here preached awhile in London, he had a preferment to a parish church in Gloucestershire, of eight pounds per annum maintenance, and it had had, many and many years, no minister; and by the connivance, or forbearance, of the reverend Bishop of Gloucester, he there preached, for some years past, in peace; of which I am past doubt that bishop hath no cause to repent. He used part of the Liturgy, not sticking at the censure of them that called this as their judgments led them. His judgment, his work, his age, and expe-

rience, set him above all factious inducements, and taught him to please God, whoever were displeased. And when, at last, he was driven away, I never heard him speak with any bitterness. He is now where God's praises are celebrated, and whence no holy soul shall ever be cast out.

V. His labour was such as beseemed one absolutely devoted to God: his preaching was very plain and familiar, fitted rather to country auditors than to curious ears; and he chose accordingly; but it was wholly for faith, love, and holiness. He was much in catechising, and very moving in his familiar exhortations, setting his whole heart upon the winning and edifying of souls, and longing for the success, as much as covetous merchants do for rich returns. He kept a private weekly meeting for the young people, to deal with them as a catechiser, by way of familiar questions; which was much of his labour wherever he came. And he much rejoiced in the young people's willingness, and his success. The greatest benefice cannot please one that worketh for the fleece, so much as he was pleased that his unwearied labour profited his flock. How thankful was he to God, and the bishop's connivance, for that short liberty to work. And to their honour I must say, that he praised not only the friendly peaceableness of the magistrates and gentry of the county, but also of his neighbour conformable ministers, that lived by him in love, and envied not his liberty.

This holy man so little cared for the hypocrite's reward, that no reproach of men did move him; nor did he count his great labour or life dear to him, that he might subserve him, that came to seek and save the lost. He took that for the joyful finishing of his course, from which Satan and many mistaken men would have discouraged him. As it was one of the greatest aggravations of Christ's sufferings, that he was crucified as a reputed sinner, even as a blasphemers, and an enemy to Cæsar, and a contemner of the law; so he knew that all things must be accounted dung that we may be found in Christ, and conform to him even in his sufferings. And if a Seneca could say, that no man more showeth himself to be a good man than he that will lose the reputation of being a good man, lest he should lose his goodness itself, and defile his conscience; no wonder if this holy man accounted not his fame too dear to preserve his conscience. And, indeed, his friends and physicians suppose that his labours hastened his death.

He came from the country to London, again to work, and,

after his journey, preaching almost every day, and some days twice, even after he began to be ill, no wonder if the fever and dysentery, that followed, despatched him. At first he fell down in the pulpit, but, on recovering, went on ; and so again, after, till he was disabled. Some will censure him for imprudence in such labours ; but they must consider what it is to be above the inordinate love of life, and to long for the good of souls. And withal, that which much emboldened him, was, that he was wont to go somewhat ill into the pulpit, and to come better out : but the heat of the season, seventy-and-three years of age, gave advantage to the messenger which God did send to end his labours, and all his sufferings.

Two things especially I commend to imitation. 1. That he was more in instructing and catechising children by familiar questions than almost any man that I have known ; which showed that he laboured not for applause. 2. He prayed as constantly as he preached, and no wonder, then, that his labours had much success. He omitted not his duty to God in his family, by the greatness of his public labours. And a man of prayer is a man of power with God.

For my part, I never saw him till his coming to live in London, I think not seven years ago, though I long heard of his successful preaching. But to show you how great his charity was, and what a loss I have myself, and how faulty I and others are in too much forgetting of our friends, I will tell you that he hath oft told me that (as I remember, above twenty years) he never went to God in prayer but he particularly remembered me. But his love has not tempted me to say a word of him which I verily believe not to be true. And I conclude it with this profession, that I scarce remember the man, that ever I knew, that served God with more absolute resignation and devotedness, in simplicity and godly sincerity, and not with fleshly wisdom, and lived like the primitive Christians, without any pride or worldly motives, or in whose case I had rather die. And, therefore, no wonder that he lived in peace of conscience, and died with Paul's words, " I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God, the righteous Judge, shall give." Which both Paul and he might say without any injury to Christ, or grace, or free justification. Thus did he finish his course in eminent fidelity, and constant peace of conscience ; and what was wanting in fuller joy, is now made up.

Use 1. And what use should we make of all, but to imitate such examples, and not to be moved by any trials, nor count our lives dear that we may finish our course with joy, and the ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus Christ, to testify the gospel of the grace of God? Run the same race, and you may have the same joy and blessed end. Would you have more particular counsel how to finish your course with joy? I shall briefly give you some; the Lord cause you and me to follow it!

I. He that never began well, cannot finish well. Search the Scriptures, and advise with the wise; prove all things, and hold fast that which is good. Take heed that you take not evil for good, and good for evil: set out in the way of truth. If you are out of the way, the faster and the further you go, the more you have to repent of, and lament. Be honest and faithful in seeking truth, and God will forsake not you. But go not with Balaam's covetous heart, and pre-engaged purpose. Oh! fear a false heart, and false teachers, especially men that plainly persecute a worldly interest and design.

II. If God, Christ, grace, and glory, be not enough for you, and seem not a sufficient portion, unless you have also prosperity to the flesh, undertake not the ministry, nor profess Christianity: for, without self-denial, contempt of the world, taking up the cross, and forsaking all, you have but the delusory name and image of Christianity. Absolutely devote yourselves to God, and hope not for great matters in the world. Except nothing from him; suspect and fear the hypocrite's reserves; serve Christ and trust him; trust him with estate, and liberty, and life, and soul, and all; study your duty for your part, and cast your care on him for his part. Take no thought what ye shall eat or drink, but seek first God's kingdom and the righteousness thereof. You will never finish your course with joy, if you be not absolutely devoted to God.

III. Preach to yourselves first, before you preach to the people, and with greater zeal. O Lord, save thy church from worldly pastors, that study and learn the art of Christianity, and ministry; but never had the christian, divine nature, nor the vital principle which must difference them and their services from the dead. Do you love other men's souls more than your own? will a dead nurse give warm and vital milk? Nothing doth more to make you good preachers, than that which doth most to make you good Christians: I thank the Lord for the

method of his grace and providence, that cast me divers years into the care of my own soul, before I purposed to preach to others, and made me read over the most of all our honest English practical divines, to make me a Christian indeed, before I set myself to the artificial part. I repent not of this unusual method.

IV. Let your joyful part of religion be most of your meditations: the infinite goodness of God, who is love; the wonder of man's redemption; the freeness and fulness of the promise; and the certainty and glory of our future state. These are the chief part of our religion, and of chiefest use; which must resolve us, fix us, quicken us, and help us to live in thankfulness and joy.

V. Above all, labour to strengthen faith in Christ, his word, and the life to come, and to live in the constant exercise thereof. Faith is it that showeth us the matter and reason of our duty and our joy. And if believing meditation have too long intermissions, our joy will also intermit. And if affliction or weakness make our present state to be grievous to us, and keep us from much present joy, yet faith and hope can see that which is to come. Many of God's faithful servants labour in peace of conscience and in hope; who, through infirmities of the flesh, have no great joys: and yet may be well said to finish their course with joy, because everlasting joy is the end, which at the finishing of it they obtain.

VI. Stick not at labour or suffering: hearken not to the repining and seducing flesh. Think nothing too much or too dear; your work is good, and much better wages in itself than fleshly pleasure. Labour for God and souls, and keep out selfishness and carnal ends, and God will secure your reward. Labour faithfully, and trust God confidently; fulfil his commanding will, whoever countermand you; and then rest in his accepting, disposing, and rewarding will, whatever befall you in the world. His will is the only infallible rule; and his will is the only secure and felicitating rest. They that conscionably do his will, may comfortably say, "The will of the Lord be done;" as our brother in his sickness often did.

His will made us, his will hath maintained and preserved us, and multiplied mercies to us. By his will we live, and by his will we die, and in his will we hope to rest for ever. Mr. Stubbs is gone before; this will hath guided him, and this will hath received him. In the same good haud I am closely fol-

lowing him. Our separation is like to be very short ; and none of you will stay long behind : farewell, vain, vexatious world ! farewell, malignant, lying, cruel world ! Welcome life, light, and love, delightful, perfect, and eternal ! Let it be our care so to finish our course with joy, that we may hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen.

Use 2. But methinks, I should not let you, that have been the hearers of Mr. Stubbs, and such as he, go without some notice what it is that this text and this providence of God do call you specially to consider. Which is, 1. Whether you have furthered the joy of your teacher's course. 2. Whether you take care that your own course may be finished with joy, and why it must be done, and how.

I. Do not think that you are not much concerned in the matter, whether your teachers live and die in joy ; neither say, when they are dead, it is too late to mind that which is past and gone. As much as it is past, your account is not past. You may hear of it again in another manner than now you do.

You are concerned in it, 1. For your own interest. 2. For their relation to you, and labours for you, in gratitude and humanity. 3. As you are obliged to the church of Christ, and regard its interest. And, 4. As you are men, and lovers of mankind.

I. What is their ministry but the seeking of your salvation ? And what is their joy, but their success (next God's acceptance of their labours). And if they miss of this, is it not you that will be the greatest sufferers ? If you fall out with your physician, or cast away, or cast up, the only physic that can cure you, is not death more to you, than the loss of his labour and physic to him ? Shall the physician mourn over his dying patient, and shall the patient think it nothing to him ? If the child prosper not, or die, the nurse's sorrow is a smaller matter than the child's death. Is your unconverted, unpardoned, miserable state, and your danger of damnation, more to us than to you ? Will your hell be no more painful than our compassion ? And when your worm never dieth, and your fire will be unquenchable, our compassion will cease, and we shall grieve for you no more.

The God that forbade Samuel to mourn any more for Saul, will cause us to approve of his righteous judgment, and to re-

joyce in the glorifying of his justice on you. Abraham did but upbraid Dives with his former sinful pleasures. Your teachers, yea, your own parents, will not mourn in heaven for all the torments that you undergo in hell, nor consent to ease you by a drop of water. (Luke xvi.)

O what a pitiful sight it is now to see a teacher or parent mourning over the misery of ignorant, careless, wilful sinners, and they themselves rejoicing, and despising compassion, and laughing at the brink of hell. I heard of a passionate wife that cut her own throat to anger her husband. And they tell us, that the Circumcellian Donatists, that separated from other Christians, in a practical zeal for their own bishop, did murder themselves to bring the odium upon their adversaries as persecutors.

But that poor sinners should merrily run towards hell, to anger their teachers, yea, that multitudes should do thus, what an instance is it of the madness of corrupted minds! One saith, 'I will never hear him more:' and another saith, 'Shall I be catechised like a boy?' and another saith, 'These preachers would make us mad, if we should believe and lay to heart what they say:' and another saith, 'Cannot one drink and be merry, and please his flesh, but he must be damned for it? Are none saved but puritans and precisians?' And who is it that will have the worst of this at last? God will not condemn us for your sins. If you will needs be miserable for ever, our desires and endeavours to have saved you shall not be lost at all to us. Oh! how dear will impenitent sinners pay for all the tears and groans which now they do constrain from their compassionate teachers!

That God who is love itself, and putteth love into parents for the education of their children, hath also put a tender love to souls, and especially to their own flocks, into every faithful minister of Christ; which maketh all their study, and labour, and sufferings, easy to them, or tolerable, at least, for the comfortable hope which they have of men's salvation. Oh! may we but serve the Saviour of the world, in the gathering of his chosen flock; and in bringing sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, in making reconciled and adopted sons of those that were the enemies of God: and holiness, what a joy would it be to every true minister of Christ. Did a damned wretch cry, 'Send Lazarus to warn my brethren, that they come not to this place of torments?' And shall not we rejoice

if we cannot only keep sinners from those flames, but also help them to live in joy with Christ and holy spirits for ever? May we see souls in heaven for ever praising God, and know that this is the fruit of our labours and God's grace? Yea, may we here see holy persons living to God, and calling upon his name, and rejoicing in hope, and serving, and honouring him in a wicked world, and say, 'These are they that God hath given to Christ by our embassy; how much sweeter will this be to us, than fleshly pleasures; and will you not allow us the joy of your salvation? If so, judge yourselves whether the loss of Christ, and grace, and heaven, and happiness, and all hope, will be a smaller loss to you, than the loss of such comfort, in your hoped welfare, will be to us.

Oh! all you that are yet unconverted, fleshly, worldly persons, strangers to a holy, heavenly life, under the ministry of such holy men as I am speaking of, think in time, I beseech you, of these two particulars.

First. What a loss is it to lose the blessing and fruit of a holy ministry. God giveth not such to all the world. Many kingdoms of heathens and infidels have no such helps. Nay, most of the christian world have too little such; all ears are not so happy as to hear the joyful tidings, the sound instructions, the close convictions, the earnest exhortations which you have heard, and these not mixed with the poison of heresies. And will you lose, will you wilfully lose all this? What! have the best of physicians, and be yet unhealed? Have the best of teachers, that long, and labour, and pray for your salvation, and yet be ignorant unbelievers, or base neglecters of this great salvation? Will you, as Capernaum, be lift up to heaven in mercies, and cast down to hell by your contempt. O that you knew in time how great a loss it is to lose one counsel, one sermon, much more all the life and labours of one such a minister of Christ, that prayed, and studied, and laboured for your souls. Do you ever hope to be saved, or not? If not, despair is a beginning of hell. If yea, do you hope to be saved without preaching, or by it? If without it, what reason have you for such hopes, when God hath made this his ordinary means? Whatever hope they may have that can have no preaching, you can have none that might have had it, and would not; or that had it, and despised and disobeyed it. But if it be by preaching that you hope to be instructed, converted, and saved, what preaching is it? Do you look for better than such as you have lost; or is

smaller and weaker remedies like to cure you, that, to the last, despised greater?

Secondly. And remember that all this will aggravate your sin, and rise up in judgment against you to your condemnation. Do you think all these sermons, and prayers, and tears, shall never more be thought on? Yes. God, who sent his ministers, sets not so light by their labours as you do. He knoweth, and thy conscience shall one day consider, what importunate exhortations thou didst neglect. How, on such a day, on such a text, his minister earnestly pleaded with thy soul, and thou hadst nothing to say against the word, and yet thou wentest on and did not repent. Oh! for your soul's sake, put us not to come in against you as witnesses to your condemnation, instead of rejoicing in your sanctification and salvation.

Oh! put us not to shake off the dust of our feet against you! Turn not all our love and labours, to kindle a greater fire for your misery. Remember, that even the merciful Saviour of souls hath said that it shall be easier yet for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for such. Fire from heaven declared the wrath of God against Sodom and Gomorrah; and will you yet have a more dreadful fire? And what moveth you to all this! Do they persuade you to any thing dishonest, or to your hurt? Will you despise all our counsel, and go to hell rather than love God, and learn and do his holy will, and live in the delightful hopes of heaven, and in love, peace, and good works, towards one another? This is all that we persuade you to: and will it not torment your consciences for ever to remember that this was all that you fled from God for, and that you avoided more than sin and hell?

Secondly. I have told you that your own interest is more concerned in the success of our ministry, than our joy. I next tell you that it is inhuman ingratitude to deny us such a joy as this. Our relation and labours for you make it our due; shall children deny their parents the comfort of their love, when it is only their well-doing and happiness that they desire? As Christ and angels rejoice at a sinner's conversion, so do true ministers in their degree. And is it not base ingratitude to deny Christ; angels, and ministers, this joy, by refusing, obstinately, to be saved?

Thirdly. And why do you take on you to be Christians, and no more regard the interest of the church of Christ? Those are the church's enemies that will not give up themselves to

Christ, that would not have him to reign over them, and subdue their fleshly minds and lusts. (Luke xix. 27; Rom. viii. 6, 7, 13.) That hinder the success of the ministers of Christ that would build up his church. And what is our building but to bring home souls? Our office is not of man, but of Christ. He giveth us our commission, though man, deliver it us. He commandeth you to receive and obey his word which we deliver to you, and terribly threateneth those that will not. (Heb. xiii. 17; John xiii. 20; Matt. ix. 36, 37; Luke ix. 18, &c.) Is it not rebellion against him, then, to be refusers? Nay, what do you but as much as in you lieth to destroy the ministerial office, and to destroy the church of God. For if we are but to stand here and talk to you a while, and not to win your souls to God, this is but an image or carcass of the ministry, as to the success and end. As you mortify all God's ordinances, and turn them into a lifeless image, so you do the ministry to you; and make it to you but "as sounding brass or tinkling cymbal." Is it worth your tithes, or are we worthy of your reverence, merely to talk to you, and never to convert and save you?

O the blindness of the minds of the ungodly! If the seekers, or other heretics, do but cry down ministers and universities, you justly rise up against them as enemies to Christianity and the Church; and yet you yourselves destroy their ministry as to yourselves, and would have but the name, and garb, and image. He that would have the tenth part of all men's revenues to be settled to maintain physicians in the land, and yet would not have men to be healed by them, is more foolish, and a worse enemy to the country, than he that would have none at all.

Fourthly. And as you are lovers of mankind, you should not deny us so reasonable a joy as your own salvation, especially to such as, for the hope of this, renounce the pleasures and honours of the world. If you could do well enough without instructors, Christ would not have appointed them; and if there had been any better way for your salvation, for our parts, we could have found out work and callings that would better have served us for worldly ends; and we could live idle, and seek preferment, and flatter, and please you, and neglect your souls in this calling that we are in.

But, then, wo to us, as well as you! Oh! remember who hath said, "Obey them that have the rule over you, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it

with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you," (Heb. xiii. 17.) He is not worthy to be called a man, that will deny any joy or good to his neighbour, which doth no hurt to himself or others? But, consider whether he be not herein worse than a devil, that will deny another the comfort of seeing him happy, and freely doing him the greatest good?

Do you not see, now, how much you are concerned, that you further our joyful finishing of our course? I beseech you, let conscience judge you, before God judge you. Speak as before God. Have you been turned by them from darkness to light; and from unbelief to a lively faith; and from a fleshly to a spiritual life; and from worldly love and hopes to the love of God, and the hope of endless joys in heaven? Are you at a point with the flattering world and fleshly lusts; and have you heartily taken God and heaven for your portion, and Christ for your Saviour, and the Holy Spirit for your sanctifier and comforter, and the word of God for your law and charter, and the servants of God for your pleasantest company, and the service and praises of God for your best and pleasantest work, and sin for your worst and greatest enemy? If this be so, bless God that made the word so effectual to you. But if it be not, you have wronged your teachers in robbing them of the joy which was their due. This is it that we studied, prayed, and preached for: this is it that we live and labour for. This was to have been the chief part of our reward from you. It is not your tithes and money, without this, that will satisfy any but an hireling.

Many old canons of the Church forbade ministers to receive any offerings or gifts from unbelievers and wicked men; as if they had said, 'Keep your money to yourselves, and think not to stop our mouths with gifts.' Give up yourselves to Christ, or you give us nothing. I tell you it is you that are our great afflictors, and you shall answer for it. It is much more to us to lose the joy of your salvations, than to lose our estates or liberties, or worldly honour and reputation: and you can never be saved if you will not be sanctified, nor happy if you will not be holy. O, yet look back and remember what counsel God sent you by his ministers, and what importunities they used with you; and if you have denied them yet their joy, O pity yourselves if you regard not them; and deny not yourselves still the present joy of a holy life, and the everlasting joy of heavenly glory, which yet you may attain.

II. And have not you also a course that should be finished with joy, as well as we? O sirs! time is precious, short, and hasty. This race is for all eternity, and is to be run but once. Heaven will be quickly won or lost for ever. Can any one hear and believe this who hath the heart of a man, and not be awakened presently to make haste? Dare you die in an unholy, unpardoned state? Dare you go out of the world more foolishly than the unjust steward out of his stewardship, before you have provided another habitation? Dare you appear before God without his Spirit and image, and without the wedding garment of sincere holiness, and so without a part in Christ? O sirs! no heart can now conceive what a dreadful appearing that will be. Alas, sirs! we are dying, we are all dying, one to-day and another to-morrow, and we are all quickly gone; and do you take no care whether you shall go next, when God bids you care, in a manner, for nothing else? Your course will soon be finished. Shall it be with joy, or the beginning of everlasting misery? Oh! resolve now, resolve this day, as you would speed for ever. God's grace must save you; but it lieth more on your present choice and resolution than careless sinners will well consider of.

Quest. But how should I finish my course with joy?

Answ. You may gather it from what is said already. Are you willing, if I tell you to do your part? Asking questions will not serve instead of work.

I. Will you see that you perish not through your own mere carelessness, and wilful neglect of what you can do for your soul? If you will not do what you can, what good will directions do you? If men will live as if they had not reason and self-love, and knew not that they must die, or care not what becomes of them for ever, what can one do for the safety of such men? As men cannot dispute, that agree not in some granted principles, so we cannot lead you to Christ by the gospel, if you agree not in some principles of humanity and self-preservation. A sottish carelessness is the undoing of the most.

II. Set yourselves to study the gospel of Christ, till you understand what salvation is, and what is the way to it, and know the nature of true religion: and then you will see in it so much truth, so much necessity, so much amiable beauty and fitness to make you wise, good, and happy, that it will win your hearts to love and pleasure in it.

III. Study thoroughly the true meaning of your baptismal

covenant, and solemnly, before God, consent to it with tongue and heart, and live as under the obligation of it all your days; and also live in the belief of all the promises of it, and expectations of all the benefits promised. The sum of all your religion for duty and comfort is comprised in your baptismal covenant. Though it be an error to be oft baptised, it is a hundred times worse error, never truly to understand, consent, and practise, after so solemn a vow and covenant.

IV. When you have given up yourselves to God, as your God and Father, your Saviour and your Sanctifier, remember that your great relations have engaged you in the greatest business, and the highest hopes in all the world. And, therefore, now live as fellow-citizens of the saints and the household of God, that have nobler converse, work, and hope, than worldly unbelievers. Remember, now, with whom and what you have to do, and that it is not a by and trifling business, but the best and greatest that you have undertaken.

V. Jo'in with those that are for heaven, whose counsel and company may be your help; separate from no Christians by way of divisions, further than God commandeth you; and do not easily forsake the judgment of the generality of godly men: but make few your familiar friends, and those such as are most wise, and humble, and sincere, and cheerful in the belief and hopes of glory, and suitable to your use and converse.

VI. In all doubts and difficulties of religion, judge not hastily before you have thoroughly heard and tried. Prefer a suspended judgment, that stayeth till it have tried, before a rash and hasty judgment of what you know not, and may repent of.

VII. Carefully govern your fleshly appetites and sense, and avoid needless temptations, especially to sinful pleasure: for lust will conceive else, and bring forth sin; and sin being finished will bring forth death. You will find sin and comfort contrary.

VIII. Especially, fear the flatteries of the world, and hopes of a pleasant life to the flesh on earth, and an itch after riches, plenty, or preferment, and designs for the attaining them; love not the world, nor the things that are in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and pride of life, the portion of the wicked; for if any man love the world (for the flesh and itself) so far the love of the Father is not in him. (1 John ii. 15, 16.)

IX. Value precious time, and live not in idleness; spend time as you would hear of it at last, and as those that know what it is to have but one short life to determine where they

shall live for ever. Hear and abhor all pastimes and triflings that would rob you of your time.

X. Converse daily in heaven while you are on earth ; let faith still see it ; let hope still make after it, and let love desire it, and delightfully remember it. There is our Father, our Saviour, our Comforter, our friends, with whom we must live for ever. There let our hearts be as the place of all our hopes, and let the strain of your religion be as heavenly as you can ; let it consist in love, in unity and concord, in the joyful praises of Jehovah, and in a pure, holy life. This will raise you above the sinful love of this transitory life, and the fear of death, and give you the foretastes of heaven on earth, while you do God's will on earth as it is done in heaven. But it is the Spirit and grace of Christ which you must beg and seek, and on which you must obediently depend, for the performance of all this, and not upon your inconstant wills. Without Christ we can do nothing ; but by his strengthening us we can do all things necessary to our salvation ; and we are more than conquerors, even in our patient sufferings, through the Captain of our salvation, who hath conquered for us.

Thus we may finish our course with joy.

A
TRUE BELIEVER'S CHOICE
AND
PLEASURE.

INSTANCED IN THE EXEMPLARY

LIFE OF MRS. MARY COXE,

THE LATE WIFE OF

DR. THOMAS COXE.



TO MY

WORTHY AND MUCH HONOURED FRIEND,

DR. THOMAS COXE.

SIR,

THOUGH your great kindness and care of the health of me and mine much oblige me to you, and your personal worth much more, and your worthy children command my great respect and love, yet none of these should have moved me to say a word of all that I have said of your deceased wife, which I had not verily believed to be true, and it was God's grace in her which much more commanded it than all my debt to you and yours.

She was so exemplary, as that I think it my duty, for the good of others, to make this publication of her character, and of this sermon.

But one great defect is here to be notified to the reader, that almost all her secret way of duty, and particular converse, is omitted, which you that were still with her could have described, for I thought meet to say no more than I either knew myself, or was obvious, and known to many.

The words which I heard but yesterday from the mouth of your brother in discourse, were such as I doubt can be said of few, that in so many years, from the hour of her marriage to her death, she was never known to do one disobliging action, or speak one disobliging word, of or to any one of her husband's kindred or relations.

Had it seemed meet to you, or to your worthy and ingenious son, and your pious daughter (the true image of her

mother,) to have been the describer of the soul and life of this exemplary saint, how much more fully could you have done it than I, that was so much less acquainted with her.

She is gone home, and you and I are at the door. The Lord give us so to live by faith on the promise and love of God, and the things unseen, that thence we may daily fetch our ruling motives, and establishing consolations, and not from a transitory, deceitful world ; and, following Christ and his saints under the cross, may with them possess the incorruptible crown, and be found at his call among those that love his appearing, and be for ever with the Lord. Amen, Amen.

November 19, 1669.

A TRUE BELIEVER'S CHOICE AND PLEASURE.

PSALM cxix. 111.

Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart.

A TEXT that speaketh of rejoicing, and that in an heritage, and an heritage for ever, may seem unsuitable to a mournful funeral; but it was chosen by our deceased friend, and not without justifiable reason. That which was a day of sorrow to us, was a day of rest and joy to her, and it was meet that she should foresee that joy, and, tasting it in the first-fruits, should commend that to us which she had found so sweet, and would bring us to the felicity which she hath now obtained. If the damned sensualist, (Luke xvi.,) would have had one sent from another world, in hope to save his unbelieving brethren, no wonder if a holy person were desirous that others should partake of her pleasure and inheritance, and, like the lepers that found the siege of Samaria raised, would not feast and rejoice alone. She chose this, no doubt, as that which was most lively imprinted on her own heart, with a just desire that it might be imprinted also on the hearts of others, that so we may not only rejoice with her that now rejoiceth in the heavenly possession, but, as Paul saith, "Every man may prove his own works, and so may have rejoicing in himself alone, and not (only) in another." (Gal. vi. 4.) Let us, therefore, by God's assistance, so improve these words, as may conduce to this desired end.

By God's "testimonies" here is meant that supernaturally revealed law and promise, which was possessed by the church of the Jews, as God's peculiar people, supposing the law of nature, and the common mercies which God had given to all the rest of fallen mankind. Both the precepts and promises are here included, the types, and their signification of the thing typified.

“ I have taken them,” signifieth, I have believed them, implying that God revealed them ; and I have accepted them, implying that God had offered them ; and I have chosen them, implying the preferring them before all competitors ; and I have trusted them, as signifying their special use for the guiding, stablishing, quieting, and saving of the soul.

“ For an heritage,” signifieth,

1. As that which I trust to as my security for an heavenly inheritance.

2. And as that which now is my best portion while I am in the way, including the things connoted.

3. And as that which I prefer before all wealth, and worldly heritage. Alexander and Cæsar had larger dominions than David, but neither of them was king of God's peculiar people, that had possession of his oracles, nor had the promises which he had, that Christ should be his son and successor on his throne.

The words “ for ever,” relate both to the inheritance as everlasting, and also to David's choice, as immutably hereupon determined.

They are said to be the rejoicing of the heart aptitudinally in themselves, which caused him to choose them, and actually, because he had chosen, believed, loved, and obeyed them.

So that this is the sum of the sense : ‘ Worldly men make choice of a worldly inheritance, and hopes, and on this they trust ; and in this they seek their chiefest pleasure : but I, though blessed largely with thy bounty, have suffered many afflictions in the world : but thy word hath been my guide, and thy promises still fulfilled to me ; and experience hath confirmed my faith and resolution to lay all my hope upon thy word or covenant, both for this life and that to come, and from it I seek and fetch my comfort : it hath been my joy in all my sorrows, and in it to the last will I rejoice.’ This is the sense of the text, from which we are all taught,—

Doct. That God's covenant or testimonies are the true believer's heritage for ever, and as such are trusted and chosen by him, and therefore, among all the allurements and the crosses of this world, are the support and rejoicing of his heart.

In the handling this I shall show you,

I. What it is in God's testimonies which make them fit to be our heritage and our joy.

II. How they are called an heritage for ever.

III. How they are so taken by believers.

IV. How far they are their joy.

I. In God's covenant or testimonies there is, 1. The Author. 2. The Mediator. 3. The applying Agent. 4. The ascertaining revelation. 5. The donative or benefit given. 6. The guiding doctrine and law. 7. And the persons or subjects connoted, to whom all this is suited, to be an heritage for ever, and the rejoicing of their hearts.

1. The author is God, the Lord of us and all, in whose hand and will is our soul and body, our life and death, our health and sickness, our joy and sorrow; whose loving-kindness is life, and better than life; (Psalm lxiii. 3;) who, if he will, can make us whole and happy, and who hath told us what he will do by his covenant. He wanteth not love, for he is love itself; essential, infinite self-love, communicating to his creatures such love as his wisdom seeth meet for them to receive. The love that gave us the Mediator and the covenant, will certainly perform it; it was of mercy that he promised, it is now of mercy and justice that he performs it. He wanteth not wisdom to rule the world by truth and goodness, and needeth not deceit and falsehood hereunto, nor to flatter such worms as we into obedience. Nor doth he, that maintaineth heaven and earth, want power to make good all his word; nor is there any adverse power to make it difficult, and hazard the success. Indeed, he that seriously considereth the divine perfection, will think it were more strange and incredible that God should not bless and glorify the faithful according to his word. If it be credible that the sun sends forth its illuminating and enlivening beams so far and wide, to so many millions of various creatures, (though it scorch the unsuitable objects that are too near,) it is credible that God, who is infinite goodness, should bless the capable with heavenly glory. And did we not see that sin maketh many incapable, it would be harder to reason to believe that all shall not be blessed by such a God, than that all the faithful shall be blessed. And we find, that though both be hard to unbelievers, they are of the two more hardly brought to believe the threatenings, than the promises, of God. What wonder is it that infinite power, wisdom, and love, should make some of his creatures blessed by communication, and man in especial, when he hath made him capable of it?

And what greater satisfaction and security can a fearful, troubled, dying man have, than the infallible word of the most

glorious God? Surely he that firmly believeth it to be his word, can hardly choose but believe that it is true, and meet for our most quieting trust.

2. The angels and Moses were the mediators of the Jewish law; but the eternal Word incarnate is the Mediator of the new covenant; promised only before, to Abraham, David, &c., yea, to Adam, but sent, when made man, in the fulness of time. (Gal. iv. 4.) And it must needs be a sure and excellent covenant which is made and confirmed by such a Mediator, named in the prophecy, "Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace:" (Isa. ix. 6 :) of the increase of his government and peace there is no end. He is the heir of all things, by whom the worlds were made; the brightness of God's glory; the express image of his person; and upholding all things by the word of his power; made better than angels, having by inheritance obtained a more excellent name; whom all the angels of God do worship; and for whom they disdain not to minister to the faithful. It is a sure and comfortable doctrine which must have such a Preacher sent from heaven, and a certain covenant which hath such a wonderful Mediator.

3. But it is not like the powerless word of man, but the holy Spirit of the Father and the Son undertaketh to accompany it, and, as the arm of God, to set it home, and make it effectual to its proper ends: we have not only heard this word, but felt it; as we hear and feel the powerful winds, though we see them not, and perceive not whence they come, or whither they go; all have felt this that are born of the Spirit. (John iii. 8.) God spake not like man when he said, "Let there be light;" (Gen. i. ;) and he teacheth not like man, when his Spirit, by his word, doth quicken, illuminate, and regenerate souls. It is a sure covenant that hath such an inward Mediator, such an agent, and advocate, and witness of Christ, speaking operatively from God to man, and speaking prevailingly in man to God.

4. And the sure manner of revelation doth make it fit to be our trust and joy. As it beareth on itself the image or impress of God's power, wisdom, and goodness; so by powerful miracles, and manifold wisdom, and unmeasurable goodness, it hath been delivered, sealed, defended, and propagated; and by a communicated spirit, or life, light, and love, in all sound believers, confirmed to this day.

5. And what is it that with such glory and certainty is de-

livered to us from heaven? It is a deed of gift, (thus sealed by Christ's blood and Spirit,) of grace, and glory; of Christ to be our Head, and Lord, and Husband, and Life, in and with him; (John v. 10, 12;) of the free pardon of all our sins, how many and great soever, and of réconciliation with God, and of justification by the blood and righteousness of our Redeemer, and of the continued teaching, preserving, sanctifying, strengthening, comforting aid of the Holy Spirit; of adoption and title to the heavenly inheritance, that being sons, and having the Spirit of the Son, by it we shall be sealed up to glory, and be made the habitation and temples of God. In a word, it is a promise of this life, so far as that all things shall work together for our good; (Rom. viii. 28;) and of the life which is to come, where we shall live in glory with Christ for ever. This is the sure and blessed covenant of God.

6. And what is the doctrine and laws of God? are they not also suited to our trust and joy? Is it not a delightful thing to read that which no mere man could tell us? How God made man and all the world, and what laws he gave him. How sin came into the world, and death by sin. How God hath governed the world from the beginning, and how he hath redeemed us. What Christ is, and what he hath done, and what he will do. And what man is, and what he should be, and what he shall be, and do, and have for ever.

And what is there in God's laws but that which is our safety, and should be our joy? If good laws be the safety and honour of kingdoms, are not God's laws so to all the world? What an ugly dungeon were the world without them; and what a worse than brutish thing were man! Oh! how happy were man, were families, were cities, were kingdoms, if all had made God's laws their rule, and all men's laws and lives had been ruled by them! Then there would have been none but wise, just, and holy rulers, that would have governed for God, and for the common good, and princes would have been indeed the fathers of their countries, and masters of their families, abhorring all contradicting selfish interests, and all injustice, tyranny, and oppression. Then subjects would have, with reverence, readiness, and fidelity, obeyed God, in obeying and honouring their parents, princes, and masters. Then all men would love their neighbours as themselves, and do as they would be done by; love and justice would reign among all, and injury, partiality, and selfishness would be abhorred. And which of us

cannot say, 'Had I been ruled by God's laws, I had escaped all the guilt, the shame, the corrections, the terrors that have befallen me. It is our sin against that sacred rule, which is the cause of all our sorrows, else what peace might we have had in our consciences, in our bodies, in our houses, in our cities, and country, as having peace with God. God's strictest laws are but his strict forbidding us to destroy or hurt ourselves and others, as you forbid fire, and water, and knives, and gunpowder, surfeiting, and poison, to your children, for their preservation.

Oh! how glad would every true Christian be, if God's laws were more fully written on his heart, and he could but be and do all that God therein commandeth. For want of this perfect conformity it is that he crieth out with Paul, "To will is present with me, but to do I find not. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!"

How joyful should we be if we could but trust God, and love him, and obey him, and be free from sins as much as the law of God commandeth us. We testify, therefore, that the law is holy, and just, and good, while we repent that we break it, and wish that we could better keep it. For this would keep our souls from guilt and shame, and terrors, and our bodies from much calamity and pain; all God's ways are pleasantness, and all his paths are peace. Great peace have they that love his law, and nothing shall offend them; let papists hide it, and accuse it, and let the ignorant and malignant scorn it, yet will believers judge it fit for their confidence and delight.

7 And the rather, because that all this is admirably suited to our necessity. We are undone sinners, and had perished for ever, without a Saviour, and a pardoning covenant. We are dark and foolish, and should have erred to damnation, without this sure and heavenly guide. We are beset with temptations; and how should we overcome them without God's promise of better things than this world can give us? We are under manifold pains and sorrows, and must shortly die; and how should we undergo all this in peace if we had not hopes of future happiness, and of that which will compensate all our losses? We have a life of service to God which must be faithfully and cheerfully done, and how should we so do it without good persuasion of this reward? He that cometh to God, must believe that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Oh! then, what a joyful word should that be to us which is

sent from God himself thus to guide, to secure, to strengthen and comfort us, by the promise of all that we need, and can well desire, sealed by the blood, miracles, and Spirit of Christ, and bearing the impress of God the author, and that to such miserable sinners as we are.

II. But how are God's testimonies our heritage for ever, when in heaven we shall have no need of Scriptures?

Ans. 1. "For ever" sometimes signifieth to the end of my life, as David saith, "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever," (Psalm xxiii.,) and so oft. And so God's testimonies were taken for his heritage, or chiefest portion, and rejoicing constantly, and to his life's end, as securing him of an everlasting heritage.

2. And the heritage promised by them, and connoted, is everlasting; and the holiness imprinted by them on his soul will be perpetuated and perfected in heaven.

III. What is it for believers to take God's testimonies for their heritage?

Ans. It is supposed that the flattering world, and the pleasures of the flesh, do stand here in competition, and are by many taken for their best, and this because they either think not of, or believe not, the better things of a life to come, and the comforts of a holy prospect and preparation. In this case, every true believer, seriously weighing all, and what can be said on both sides, what the world and flesh will be and do for him, and what God, and grace, and glory will be and do, doth wisely discern and resolve,

1. That the world is vanity, and sin abominable.

2. That God is all-sufficient, infinitely good, and to be trusted, and his word most wise and just and true, and therefore, though his belief have its imperfections and assaults, yet he so far believeth God's promises to be sure, and his precepts to be good and necessary, as that he resolveth here to place his hope and trust for his whole felicity in this life and hereafter, and to give up himself to the study, love, and obedience of God's laws, as the guide and security, and comfort of his soul, renouncing all the flatteries of the flesh and world which stand against it, and are preferred by sensual unbelievers.

In few words, this was David's faith and choice, and this is the faith and choice of all true believers, by which we may

discern whether we are such, though all have not the same degree of trust and fixed resolution, yet all have this much in sincerity.

IV. Quest. But can all say, 'They are the rejoicing of my heart.'

Answ. All of them can say,

1. We see that there is in the word and covenant of God in Christ, unspeakably more matter fit to be our joy, than in all the pleasures, and wealth, and honours of this world.

2. And therefore we prefer it before them all, in our desire and our fixed choice.

3. And we find so much goodness and suitableness to us in this sacred word, as that we love it as our food and our security, though not with the appetite and love which we desire.

4. And though we have not that joy in this our love to it, and in the hopes of promised glory, which a stronger faith and love would cause, yet we find that it is our best, and we perceive more good in it than in sinful pleasures, and the true and chief support of our souls in all our fears and troubles, and in our prospect of another life, is from the love and word of God through Christ.

And though our pleasure in it be not sensual and luscious, it is much more solid and satisfying to our souls, than we find in any other thing.

And the sweetness which we taste in it, is greater at some times than at other.

And the comfort which we have in our bodily health and welfare is much, as it signifieth to us the love of God performing to us his promises, and helping us to serve him with joy and gladness, in order to everlasting joy.

This is the ordinary case of true believers, though extraordinarily: 1. Some tempted, troubled, melancholy Christians, overwhelmed with grief and fears, do not perceive this much in themselves. 2. And the healthfuller, stronger sort of Christians have yet a more sweet and constant pleasure, in the testimonies and ways of God.

Having said thus much for explication, a little more may suffice to show you why and whence it is that believers receive the testimonies of God with this fixed choice, and trust, and pleasure.

1. It is from honest self-love and interest. They certainly

find that it is their best, that it is true and good, and that there is nothing else to be found in this world that will serve instead of it, to be a quieting security, guide, and comfort to the soul. They perceive what they need, and that nothing else can supply those needs. This must be their hope, or they must despair.

2. It is from holy suitableness and love to God, and the goodness which they relish in his word. As God giveth every living creature an appetite suitable to his food and benefits, so doth he to the new creature. Holiness is mostly the soul's appetite to God, and spiritual good. The word which promiseth and guideth us to the incorruptible crown of glory, is an incorruptible seed; (1 Peter i. 3—6;) and it is our milk or food; (1 Peter ii. 2;) and by it we are made partakers of the divine nature; (2 Peter i. 4;) and it is the ingrafted or innaturalized word which is able to save our souls. (James i. 21.) And as the whole stock is marvellously turned to serve a little graft which is planted into it, and as if it had lost its former kind, doth bring forth only the fruit of the graft, so is God's word implanted in us to the change of our nature, and our fruits; and it is no sound appetite which hath no pleasure. No wonder if a strong belief do cause us to "rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, that we may receive the end of our faith, our salvation." (1 Peter i. 6—8.)

All God's commands and promises have, by the divine impression of them on our souls, left somewhat there which is like them, and connatural; even a holy light to understand their truth and goodness, and a holy love to them and the things revealed, to desire them, and take pleasure in them, and a holy liveliness to pursue the good desire. And this is the writing of the law and gospel on our hearts; and in this sense it may be said that God, that Christ, that the Holy Ghost is in our souls, and dwelleth in us, even as an efficient principle, and a beloved object, and desired end. And if this be all that they intend, those called quakers have no reason to accuse us for not preaching a God and a Christ within us. And if this be it that is meant by those who tell the world, that by saying that the Holy Ghost is in us, we are more arrogant than the pope, that claimeth a visible monarchy; we glory in this joyful privilege, this earnest, seal, and first-fruits of heavenly glory, and humbly thank him, who hath vouchsafed it, and assured us of it in his word. (Rom. viii. 9, 11; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. iii. 17; 1 John

iv. 13 ; 1 Cor. iii. 16 ; 2 Tim. i. 14 ; 1 John iii. 24, and iv. 12, 15, 16.) And if the scorers have any belief of the Scriptures, let them read and tremble, " If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his." (Rom. viii. 9.)

III. I have given you the sense and the reason of this doctrine ; we come hither to learn what use to make of it. And I think if I preach also on the copy or impress of this text, whose relics we have laid in the dust, and tell us what use she made of such doctrine, it will be a considerable help to our own application.

I have never loved or used to adorn sepulchres, or hang out specious signs at the door of pride, ambition, tyranny, or worldliness, to entice others to imitate prosperous sinners in their sin ; were I to preach at the funeral of an Alexander or a Cæsar, I had rather say that which may save the living from following them in pride and bloodshed, than to tempt men to the like sin and misery.

To praise damned men, because they had the pleasures of sin for a season, is to be more foolish and uncharitable than the tormented gentleman, (Luke xvi.,) who would have had one sent from the dead to warn his brethren, lest they should follow him to that place of torment, by preferring fleshly pleasure and prosperity, before the life and hope of saints. Our praises ease not tormented souls. It is a mark of the citizens of the holy city, that " A vile person is contemned in their eyes ;" but withal, that they " Honour those that fear the Lord ; for God doth honour them."

My duty, therefore, to God, and my love to holiness and holy persons, and to you in special that are her children and other relations, commandeth me to tell you (though some of you know it better than I) that our deceased friend, in the course of her pilgrimage, did speak of herself by her constant practice, what David professed in this text. Though I speak but from eighteen or nineteen years' acquaintance with her myself, I have full evidence of it for the former part of her life ; and my acquaintance with her by neighbourhood, and mutual esteem, hath been such as hath given me more advantage to know her, than most have had ; though I remember not ever to have spoken with one person that hath known her, that did not take her for an extraordinary and eminent example of the piety and virtues which I shall mention.

If the hypocrites seek the praise of men, verily they have

their reward (a poor reward); but she, seeking first the kingdom of God, and the honour that is of him, had this cast in as overplus. I never heard that any person of any persuasion did speak evil of her, or question her eminent sincerity and worth.

Had she come to this by sinful compliance, she might have feared Christ's words: "Wo to you when all men speak well of you;" (Luke vi. 26;) but as God hath not left himself without witness to the very heathens, so he hath not left innocency, wisdom, love, peace, and piety, without some witnesses in the consciences of the ungodly; few of them have the face to speak against these in their proper names; and if he could not dishonour them by our mixed faults, and by the slanderous affixed names of heresy, schism, disobedience, hypocrisy, fanaticism, folly, and what else ignorance and malignity can devise, the devil knew not how to dishonour holiness and virtue, nor to encourage the blind world to so common a hatred and opposition of them, as they show in all nations of the earth.

When she chose this text, it was from such a suitable spirit, as all men choose the food, the friends and company, the business and discourse, which by agreeableness they most delight in. That she made God's word and covenants (connoting God's love, Christ, grace, and glory, the spring, matter, and end) her best, her heritage, her all, contemning all that stood in competition; and that these were the rejoicing of her heart, she showed to us that knew her, by these notable effects.

I. By her constant, serious, diligent use of the word of God, by hearing, reading, conference, and meditation. Her food was not more constantly used, nor, I believe, so sweet to her. Her hearing in the public assemblies, nothing but necessity could interrupt; and her private constancy her relations know. She practically told us that the blessed man's "delight is in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate day and night." (Psalm i. 2.)

II. She made so much (in esteem, use, and thankfulness) of every little of the help she could get in these spiritual things, as showed that they were her heritage and joy. When some come home with accusations of the sermon, as dry, dull, or weak, she found in it something for profit and solace. I am sure my own conversation and duties have been truly guilty of the foresaid faults; and yet how gladly would she come over the way to us at prayer-time. How much did she value now

and then a little (too dull, unprofitable) conference, and took it for a loss that she could have no more. How glad was she of now and then a too dry and short letter, and how carefully would she keep them; as if, with the woman of Canaan, she had been begging for the crumbs. Alas! our duller appetites seldom so desire after, or delight in, much larger portions of well-dressed food, but fulness hath loathing, and we call it dry manna, which we are weary of; or every little fault in the dressing turneth our stomach against it; full souls loathe the honeycomb, but to the hungry every bitter thing is sweet.

III. She loved and received the word of God from any faithful minister that brought it. It is true that she more frequented and desired some than others; but her religion was not faction, or siding with this party, or with that; she was far from a schismatical mind or practice. When one party separate from all that preach in the parish churches, and another from all that preach elsewhere; she separated from neither.

IV. Accordingly, she loved all persons that feared God as such; not confining her affections or kindness to those of this or that controvertible opinion; but that candour and holy simplicity, and serious practical religion which she had herself, was it that she loved in all others whomsoever.

V. And accordingly her conference was not about controversies or matters of contention, in which too many spend their hours in these times, but that which tendeth to edification, and to administer grace to the hearers. She was not such as Paul oft reproveth for striving about words, and little things, that tend not to edify, but subvert.

VI. Much less was she tainted with any heresy or dangerous error in religion, nor ever drawn from the truth, and her spiritual steadfastness; but cleaved to the form of wholesome words, and the simplicity that is in Christ, and to them that held the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; avoiding the vain janglings of men of contention, pride, and corrupt minds.

VII. She was not of a censorious backbiting temper, nor used, as too many faulty Christians, to make it her discourse to find fault with others, and make herself the judge of controversies cases, actions, and persons which she understood not; but had learned that lesson, "Speak evil of no man;" and to know and be called to it, before she judged.

VIII. She was very desirous of the good of all, and glad of

any thing which tended to promote the conversion and saving of men's souls.

IX. She was charitable and liberal also to their bodies, in an unusual degree; as I am able to say by particular experience, in which I have known it exercised to the poor.

X. Her humility and detestation of pride was manifest, not only in her garb and behaviour, but in her low thoughts of herself, and the lowliness of all her conversation, and great dislike of all that savoured of pride.

XI. She was not morose, nor a refuser of converse and useful visits, when reason required them: but she took it for a great affliction to have much diversion by company, or by matters, from her constant course of better work; and (besides her health) was, therefore, the more inclined to be much in the country, that her mind and time might not be at the mercy of too much intruding diversions, and unprofitable discourse.

XII. Much more was she averse to all sorts of sensuality; such pleasing of the flesh as corrupteth the mind, and turneth it from holy work and pleasure; and such vain recreations as waste precious time, and profit not ourselves or others. Holy things were her food and feast, her work and recreation.

XIII. Her prudence in all matters was very exemplary; being much more against unadvised rashness, and actions which tend to ill effects, than most of us of the stronger sex; and I confess I should think much better of myself if I could equal her herein. In which her acquaintance commonly admired her, though this is a point which all must acknowledge much imperfection in.

XIV. And her gentleness, meekness, and calmness of mind and carriage was very amiable to her friends, and most that did converse with her. She was a great adversary to passionate behaviour, which surely came from that power of grace, which had made love and meekness become a nature in her, seeing no such thing could be else expected in one of her sex, and complexion, and bodily weaknesses.

XV. She did not, as the hypocrite, give God the second place in her heart and life, and the world the first, nor put off Christ with the leavings of the flesh, nor take this world for her best or heritage, and the next only for a reserve when she must needs leave this; she seemed to prize no heritage but God, nor to set much by any transitory vanity whatsoever.

XVI. She excelled in the earnest desire of her children's

good, and in the care of their well-doing and salvation. How oft hath she desired me to pray for them. How glad was she if I would at any time but converse with them, and advise them : they know better themselves (though I know much) how much she prayed for them. How oft and tenderly she counselled them. What letters of serious, holy counsel she would write to them. And how like she was to Job, who prayed and sacrificed for his children when they were merry and feasting together, fearing lest they should forget God, and sin against him.

XVII. This kind of life which I have described, was her calling and trade, and in a manner her only business in the world. It was not now and then in a good mood, like a feast and recreation; but as she knew that one thing is needful, so she chose that better part, which never was, nor will be taken from her. She so lived as if she had but this one thing to mind and do in the world, to please God by obeying him, and to cleave to Christ; and to do good and to be saved. Nothing else seemed to be much in her mind, thoughts, care, and business; her life seemed to be but this one thing. But I must confess that poor and tempted persons, that are under many worldly wants, crosses, and employments, cannot be expected to reach her measure in this; though one thing be their best and portion, they may be tossed with many troublesome cares and businesses. But God gave her both mind, opportunity, and help to live in as even a course of constant holiness in a family, as monks can pretend to or hope for in their community or solitude. Religion was her very life.

XVIII. In this life she had also a constant peace of conscience, bewailing her imperfections, but not living in melancholy, despair, hard thoughts of God, or an uncomfortable sort of religion. I have oft heard her speak of her lamented weakness of faith, love, and heavenly desires and joy; but never, that I remember, one doubting word of her own sincerity and salvation; but her ordinary speech was lamenting that we were all so weak in our belief of the word of God, and the unseen world, and what excellent persons we should be, if herein we had a stronger faith, that were liker unto sight; and how much it should be the business of all believers, to pray and labour for an increased powerful belief hereof, as that which would set all right in us.

XIX. Her patience under her bodily infirmities also was ex-

emplary. Her weakness made her so liable to dangerous coughs while she was in London air, that by this she was constrained to live much from home; and most of all her life she was tormented with a frequent headach; but in her patience in all this she did possess her soul, and patience furthered experience, and experience hope; and she learned more the quiet fruits of righteousness by being much exercised herein.

XX. And as by this she daily learned to die, so the expectation and preparation for death was her continual work and state. She lived, and heard, and prayed, and wrote her letters to her children as at the brink of the grave, and the door of eternity. Not that her diseases did seem to us to be very mortal, or threaten this sudden change; but she knew the brevity of man's life, and that death is ready to remove us all, and what a moment it is till that certain hour.

And as she lived holily and in peace with God and man, so she died with ease and little likelihood of the ordinary miseries of fear or pain. A little soreness and swelling of her leg, and pain towards the hip, turned to two swooning fits, and in the third or fourth, having been in quiet discourse with her husband, she as quietly sunk and died away, desiring that I should be sent for to pray with her: she was dead before I came, without any signs of nature's striving. And she had said to her daughter after her former fits, she did not think that one could have died so easily as she had almost done. A death thus expected, and thus prepared for, is not to be called sudden. Thus God can make death easy to some of us, that are apt to over-fear the antecedent pain. And, now, what can be more (almost) desired in this world, than such a life, and such a death. Our dear friend is at home with Christ, and God's will, which is goodness and love itself, is so fulfilled; even that will which must dispose of all things, and in which only we must seek our rest.

And having described this true copy of the text, I may boldly speak of it to the several sorts.

I. I may ask again both quakers and scorners, whether the Holy Spirit do not dwell and work in such among us, as our dear friend now deceased was.

II. I may ask unbelievers and Sadducees, whether these operations of the Spirit of God on believers be not a sign that God owneth the gospel by which he thus worketh; and that Christ.

liveth and reigneth, who can thus still send a sanctifying Spirit into believers' souls. And whether it be not blasphemy to think and say, 'Either that these excellent endowments of souls are not of God, or that he giveth them all in vain, and that believers are all deceived by God, and labour and hope all their days, for that which hath no being; and that the better God maketh them, the more deluded, vain, and frustrate he maketh them, and ruleth and amendeth the world by falsehood.'

III. I may ask the papists, with what face they can say as they use to do, that they never heard of a Protestant saint? And whether we may not be as religious in the places that God hath set us in, as if we turned recluses, monks, or nuns, and shut up ourselves from doing any good in the world?

IV. I may ask the malignant, that call all serious godliness hypocrisy, whether such a life as this doth savour of dissimulation? and whether such seriousness and hypocrisy are not contraries, and hypocrisy be not a profession without that seriousness, which is sincerity? And whether they that in baptism solemnly vow to take God for their God, and Christ for their Lord and Saviour, and the Holy Ghost for Christ's advocate and witness, and their Sanctifier and Comforter, and to renounce the flesh, the world, and the devil; and, when they have done, perform none of this which they vowed; but to live to the flesh and world which they renounced, and take a holy life as needless, yea, and hate it; I say, whether these be not the impudent hypocrites that vow and profess that holiness which they abhor, rather than they that, with all their diligence, perform the holy vow which they have made. And if wives promise fidelity to their husbands, servants to their masters, and subjects to their princes, are they the hypocrites that are serious and keep their promise? or they that were never serious in it, but scorn the keeping of it?

V. And as to those malignant persons that take this strict and serious diligence for men's souls to be but scrupulosity, or the character of some over-zealous bigots or puritans who are most inclined to schism, and to be troublesome or dangerous to states, I ask them,

1. What is there in all the description which I have here truly given you, which is injurious or dangerous to church or state, or any person? Will it hurt any one that God and men

are seriously loved? and that God's testimonies are trusted and delighted in and obeyed? and that God's kingdom and righteousness is first sought?

2. Is it not Christ, and Christianity, and Scripture that you accuse? If it be schismatical and dangerous to be serious in performing what we profess and vow, surely it is bad in baptism to vow it, and still by calling ourselves Christians to profess it. To accuse, hate, and scorn the serious practice of your own professed religion, is to be the most foolish self-condemners, and, in some respects, worse than Mahometans, infidels, and heathens.

VI. But my most earnest desire is to you the loving husband, and beloved children of our departed friend, that you will not overlook,—

1. The correction,
2. The sin,
3. The mercy,
4. Or the duty which God now calleth you seriously to consider.

(1.) I need not persuade such as are rather apt to overmuch sorrow, not to despise this chastening of the Lord, but rather not to faint under his rebuke. But I cannot dissuade you from a sense of your loss; we that are your neighbours feel it: but you much more, to whom it is much greater. What saints in heaven do know of us, or think of us, or do for us, we shall better know when we are there: but here you are deprived of the daily prayers which she sent up for you; of the continuance of her loving care of your souls, and watchfulness over you; of her wise and faithful counsels to you, and of her imitable example, as it was still before you; a husband of a pious, prudent helper, and children of a tender affectionate mother; your great sorrows tell me you feel your loss.

(2.) And all correction is for sin, which is worse than suffering. Oh! fall down before God, and with penitent tears bewail your sin, which hath caused your loss. Humbly confess how unworthy you were of such a mother, and beg of God to forgive that sin.

(3.) But mercy also, as well as sin and loss, must be acknowledged. Your sorrow must give due place to thankfulness and comfort. Your mother is taken from you, but remember,

1. What a mercy it was, and is to you, that you are so related to such parents, seeing God hath promised special mercy

to the faithful and their seed; and if any of you miss it, it will be through your own ingratitude and contempt.

2. What a mercy is it that all her prayers for you are yet in force, and more of the answer of them may yet be sent you, if you reject it not.

3. You have yet all her holy counsels to remember, and they may profit you while you live.

4. And though she be gone, I hope her example will never be forgotten by you.

5. And what a mercy is it that, under all her infirmities, you enjoyed her so long.

6. And yet how much greater cause of thankfulness have you that she so lived and so died, and that you may think of her with comfort as being with Christ, and hope to be with her for ever. Every one hath had a mother, but every one had not such a mother as you have had.

(4.) And I have intimated your duty, while I have mentioned your loss and mercy.

1. Think over often what sin she reprov'd in you, and what counsel she gave you; and now revive your resolution to obey it.

2. Remember what she was wont to pray for on your behalf; and let it not now be along of your neglect or wilfulness, that you are without it.

3. Remember her humble, moderate, holy example; and think whether your souls have not as much need of the greatest care and diligence as her's had? And why should not you be as studious to please God, and make sure of heaven as she was? Bless God that you have such a pattern, that hath so long dwelt with you, for your imitation, next your imitation of Christ. Holy simplicity is despised by the world, but it will prove the only wisdom at the last.

I have told you what use to make of the example of our deceased friend. Let me now tell you what use of the text which she so much loved, transcribed, and chose.

1. And, first, here you may learn the nature of true faith and sound religion. It taketh God's testimonies and promises for our heritage, and for the comfort of our hearts. It is not true faith, unless we so trust God's promises for this life and that to come, as to take what he promiseth for our best, and our inheritance, and his promise for our best security and title, and his law for our governing rule that we may obtain it.

So that, 1. Here you see how we differ from infidels that do

not trust their everlasting hopes and happiness on the promise of God.

2. And how we differ from hypocrites who speak best of heaven, but really look for their best on earth, which Christ calleth "trusting in their riches," because that is, indeed, their trust, from which they have their greatest expectations, and for which they most labour and will leave all: this a believer doth for promised happiness; and this the worldly hypocrite doth for the prosperity of the flesh on earth.

3. And here you see that faith and godliness are not melancholy, uncomfortable things, as the devil and the flesh would persuade inexperienced fools and unbelievers, unless it be sad to have security from God of a heavenly heritage, and rejoice therein.

And here you see the differences between the mirth of a fleshly infidel, and of a believing saint. One is like a drunkard that is merry for an hour in a brutish kind of befooling pleasure; or like one that hath a pleasant dream, or one that heareth a jest or merry tale, or seeth a pretty comedy or show. The other is more rational and heart-contenting than it should be to any of you to have good security for many hundred years' life and health, and prosperity here on earth. Such a birth-right do profane fools sell for such a morsel, not knowing that the fear of God caused by true faith is the beginning of wisdom.

Hence, therefore, we may learn how to try our sincerity of faith. Doth it make us take God's promise and the thing promised, as our heritage? Though we are not without temptations to doubting, nay, nor without the remnants of unbelief, but our hearts are troubled, when we look beyond death, with many fears; yet if we so far trust God's word, as resolvedly to take it for that which we will adhere to, and lay our chiefest hopes upon, we have a faith that will entitle us to the promised benefits.

Object. But some may say, 'I cannot say that it is the rejoicing of my heart.'

Answ. 1. Can you say that you take it for that in which you place and seek your joy, though you cannot yet attain it; and that you prefer any other pleasure in your esteem and choice and seeking? If so, you show that you truly believe and trust to the faithfulness of God's word, though yet you reach not what you seek. Desire is the first-fruit of faith and love, and holy joy is the flower and perfection.

2. Cannot you say that it is this word that maketh you hope that there is for man a better life, and that you shall not perish like the beasts, and that your fears and sorrows are somewhat abated by the promises of God?

3. Cannot you say that you perceive a pleasing goodness in the word of God, which maketh it welcome and acceptable to you?

By what I have mentioned, you may find,

1. That the word hath not been in vain unto you, when it hath caused such effects.

2. And that the same Spirit is in you which wrote the word, or else you would not love and desire it, and take it for suitable food and pleasure, yea, your heritage and joy.

3. And you may hence perceive that you are not without the love of God himself, though you see him not, and have not such sensible conceptions of him as you have of men and things which you have seen; for if you love truth and goodness and holiness in God's word, because it is such, you sure love best the greatest truth, goodness, and holiness, and that is God.

4. And hence you may perceive that though our nature love not death, and a weak faith will not overcome all fears, when we think of coming into an unseen world, yet really you are lovers of heaven, in that you are lovers of that which constituteth heaven and is its desirableness to man; even holiness and God's love, and glorious presence, and our perpetual joy herein. If you desire this, you desire heaven, though the fear of death do make you doubt of it.

5. And hence you may find that you are not worldly hypocrites, else it is not God's promises and law that you would take for your heritage and joy; but worldly prosperity and fleshly pleasure, and God and heaven should have but the leavings of the flesh, for fear of an after-reckoning at death.

6. And though your joy be small, you may know that it is of the right kind, when it is chiefly sought in God's love and promises; and you would not let go the word of God, and lose your part in it for all the vanities of this world.

III. Hence also you may learn why all true Christians so much value the testimonies or word of God? Why they so much read it, think of it, talk of it, and hear of it, and are loth that papists should corrupt it, or conceal it in an unknown tongue, or that any should deny them the necessary use of it, or

silence the ministers that preach it to them? who would willingly be deprived of his heritage or heart rejoicing?

IV. Yea, indeed, hence we see how much we should set by it, and use it, how dear it should be to us, how strictly we should obey it, with what delight we should read and meditate in it, how diligent we should be to confirm our belief of it, and how we should fetch our hope and comfort from it in life and at our death?

V. And you may see hence that it is no wonder that the devil and all his servants in the world are enemies to the word of God, because they are enemies to our heritage and joy: and there are few better signs while many pretend to be for Christ, to know who are really for him, and who are against him and his greatest enemies, than to judge of men as they further or hinder, love or hate, the word of God as to its proper use, as the heritage and joy of holy souls.

VI. But the chief part of my application is to commend this wise and holy choice, and solid comfort, to you all; and to beseech you presently to imitate David, and turn away from all inconsistent pleasures. If you live in sorrow or deceit, and die in desperation, it is not for want of an offer from God of better things. Have you lived hitherto as thus resolved? If you have, the Lord confirm you; and, be sure, such hopes shall not deceive you. If you have not, what will you now choose and do? If you live not to some end, you live not like men, according to reason. If you have chosen what end to live for and seek, what is it? Consider, I beseech you, of these things following, before it be too late.

1. What will you take for your heritage, or your best, if not the future promised joys, and what will you take for your security but God's word? What is it that you place your chiefest hopes in? Shall health and wealth, and pleasure to the flesh, and honour among men, be taken for your heritage? Dare you, under your hands, make a covenant for these to quit all your hopes of the life to come? If not, which is it you prefer, and which would you quit, if one must be hazarded or lost? Which hath the nearest and highest place in your hearts? Which seek you first, and make all other things give place to? O sirs! it is a shame to our stupid hearts, that we have need to be so often told by preachers that we must die, and that our flesh must shortly lie neglected in dust and darkness, till the resurrection, and that we, and all the deceitful trifles of this world, are ready

to part for ever ! It is a shame that we must be oft told that which every fool and child, at the use of reason, may know, how poor and how short an heritage, or pleasure, all those have, who have no better than this world can give them !

What say you ; will you die in hope, or in despair ? If unbelief make you hope that there is no hell, yet hope of heaven you can have none, unless you trust the word of God. The light of nature, indeed, is such a natural word, or revelation, as may tell us much of a future life of retribution ; but God's supernatural revelation is so much clearer, that we cannot expect that he will see by a lesser, who wilfully rejects a greater light. Sure all men would live for ever if they could, and all would be for ever happy. You would not sure die like dogs, without any hope of a better life hereafter, if you could have good security for such hopes ? And what better security is there to be found by mortal men than the promises of God, confirmed by Christ's blood and miracles, and by the seal of his Holy Spirit.

In a word, without all doubt, either heaven must be your heritage, or you must have none that is worthy of a serious thought, and enough to keep a man from wishing that he had never been born ; or been a brute that had not reason to know the matter of his griefs and fears : and either God's word seconding the light of nature, must give you hopes of a better life, or you must live and die in mere despair. And shall that be your wilful choice ?

2. Consider how invaluable a mercy it is to man, yea, to sinful, miserable man, that God should vouchsafe to give him such an everlasting heritage, and such security for it ; and that on the mere thankful acceptance of the sinner. And how worthily will they be undone that, by wilful refusal, are deprived of freely offered felicity.

3. And, consider how suitable an heritage and security it is that is offered us, and how fit for our joyful acceptance and esteem.

The thing promised is no less than endless glory with God our Redeemer, and all the blessed. It is in the world where we must be for ever : it is the perfection of that which every holy soul desireth. It is our best, our all : it must be that or nothing ; that or hell.

The word or covenant which is our trust,

1. Is God's own word.

2. It perfecteth and secondeth natural revelation and hope.

3. It beareth on itself the impress of God, even his power, wisdom, and love, in wonders, prophecies, and grace. It is sealed by the blood of Christ, by his own and his disciples' multitude of miracles, and by the gift of his sanctifying Spirit to all true believers, to the end. It is confirmed to our souls by the experience of the power of it, and the blessed effects, and this indwelling spirit, the witness of Christ; and by the answer of prayers, by many providences, and by the experience of all believers to this day.

It is excellently suited to all our needs, to our wants, our dangers, our fears, our doubts, yea, and our sinful unworthiness in the freeness of God's mercy, and all his gifts.

Indeed, man had rather live by sight, and would fain know, by seeing, whither souls go, and what they are, and have and do, hereafter. But it is not we, but God that is the ruler, and fittest to choose both the gift and means, the end and way. If we thankfully trust and improve a promise, we shall quickly see and have possession. Blessed be God for the light of his gospel, to guide us up to the light of glory! O that we had hearts to trust it, love it, and rejoice in it, as we have just cause!

4. And is it not a great mercy of God, that he hath herein called us to a life of happiness and present joy. If he had bid us only weep for sin to the last breath, the condition had been easy, as for pardon, and hope of endless mercy; but he hath given us a word which he would have to be the rejoicing of our hearts, and do we not love joy, or have we any better?

I have not now time, and I much more want myself such a mind and heart as I should have, to tell what cause of daily joy God hath given us in his word and covenants. But this I will tell you, that our want of joy is our daily sin and shame, as well as our loss and suffering, and among all the discoveries of the sinful weakness of our faith, hope, and love, our want of rejoicing in the word of promise, and hope of glory, is not the less. O what an enemy is death in this respect, that standing between it darkeneth and affrighteth us from our joys! but Christ hath conquered death to deliver those that through fear of it are subject to bondage. (Heb. ii. 15.) And though we cry, 'O miserable men! who shall deliver us?' we yet thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And I must second the testimony of our deceased friend, in professing for your encouragement my own experience; I have

taken God's testimonies for my heritage, and they have been these fifty years, or near, the pleasure of my life, and sweeter than honey, and more precious than thousands of gold or silver. As we tell men, in charity, of the things which we have found good, the medicines that have healed us, and commend the persons that have been friendly to us; and as man's nature is inclined to propagate the knowledge, and communicate the good which we partake of, and grace increaseth this inclination, so I take it to be my duty to add herein my own experience, if it may contribute to the determining of your choice; and reason teacheth all men to regard that means and remedy good the more, which many have had experience of, and it is not to be taken for vain ostentation to profess that which all must have in some degree that will be saved.

Though the natural and sinful fears of pain and death too long deprived me of much of the joy which I should have had in the thoughts of the unseen world, and too much doth so to this day, yet I must say that the word of God, and the persons that love and practise it, and the holy way of life and peace, and all things that here savour of heaven, have been so good and pleasant to me, as enableth me to assure you, that on earth there is nothing so worthy of your desire and joy.

And to encourage you, I will tell you, by my own experience, what benefit may be expected from this kind of delight, agreeable to David's and our friend's experience.

1. By this means my life hath been almost a constant pleasure.

2. This pleasure hath much upheld me under almost constant bodily infirmity and pain.

3. It hath made all my sufferings from men, and crosses in the world, to be tolerable, and very easy to me; had not God's word been my delight, I had lived uncomfortably, in constant pains and sorrows, and had perished in my trouble.

4. It hath saved me from the snares of sinful pleasures; man's nature will seek for some delight, and they that have it not in good will, seek it in things hurtful and forbidden; it is only greater things that can overcome our mistaken choice of lesser. In my childhood, I was sinfully inclined to the pleasure of romances, and of childish sports, but when I tasted the sweetness of God's testimonies and ways, I needed no other, but spit out those luscious, unwholesome vanities. And though common knowledge, called learning, be pleasant to man's nature, and I cannot say that I have not overvalued it, yet I

must say, that the relish of these greater matters hath made me see how much of it is vanity, and hath saved me from the pursuit of that part of it which doth but please curiosity and fancy, and tendeth not to use, and to greater things, and sensual pleasures I had no need of.

5. It hath by this means made that pleasure which I had to be such as my reason did approve and justify, whereas if I had sought it in preferment, wealth, or sensuality, a foreseeing conscience would have affrighted me out of all my pleasure, and I should have had more of the pricks than of the rose, of the sting than of the honey. Of this pleasure you need not fear too much, but of the sensual pleasure, we more easily catch a mortal surfeit.

6. This sweetness of God's word hath made also my calling and daily labour sweet, so that it had my heart, and not my forced hand and tongue.

7. And this hath helped my constancy herein, for when we have no delight in our work, we grow weary, and weariness tendeth to give it over, or to do it heartlessly, and slubber it over in unacceptable hypocrisy.

8. And this hath much saved me from the sinful loss of time; pleasure cureth trifling and delays. Who needeth vain pastimes that delighteth in God's word and work?

9. And this hath been to me an excellent help for the increase of knowledge; for the mysteries of godliness have still more to be learned by the wisest man; and as boys at school, so the scholars of Christ, learn best who have most pleasure in their books.

10. And this pleasure hath much confirmed my belief of the truth of Scripture, when it hath borne its own witness to my mind, and I have tasted that goodness which is agreeable to its truth. I easily believe him that commendeth a thing to me, when I taste or feel that it is good.

11. And this pleasure hath helped me against vain thoughts and talk, while the truths of God were sweet, and so continually welcome; it is easy to think of that which we delight in, and sinful delights corrupt the thoughts and speech with constant sin.

12. And this pleasure hath somewhat fed my daily thankfulness to God, in the constant experience of the goodness of his truth and ways.

13. And it cured the error of my beginnings when I strove

for nothing so much as to weep for sin, and perceived not that the joy of the Lord is our strength, and the flower of holiness, and likest to the heavenly state; and that the Spirit sanctifieth, by making God and goodness pleasant to us.

14. And hereby it made me find, that the praises of God are the sweetest and noblest exercises of religion, when before I placed more in lamenting sin and misery.

15. And this maketh many things needless to me that else would seem needful. I want not more company; I want no recreation but for my body. If I have not what I would have, I see where only it is to be found.

16. And I am assured that the constant pleasure of my mind hath not only kept me from melancholy, but from greater sicknesses, and tended to the lengthening of my life, (as Scaliger saith pleasant studies do,) for constant pleasure must needs tend to health.

17. And this taste hath made me long for more, and had I not felt that it is good to draw near to God, and very desirable to know him and his will, I should never have so earnestly begged for clearer light, and more near and sweet communion with him. Pleasure is the cause of strong desire.

18. It hath been one of my greatest helps against many temptations of subtle enemies, that tempt men to sadducism, and doubt of the life to come.

19. It hath made me more communicative to others, for we would all have partakers in our delights.

20. And it hath greatly furthered my repentance and hatred of sin, when I have tasted what pleasure it depriveth us of, and the abhorrence and loathing of myself that can delight in such a God, and Saviour, and word no more. When I taste how good it is, and see so much reason to rejoice in it, and the hopes of glory a thousand fold more than I do, none of all the actual sins of my life do make me half so much loathe my naughty heart, as to think that my want of greater joy in so great and near a good, doth show so much weakness in my faith, and hope, and love. O that I had more faith and love, that I might have more of this delight!

Hearers, I have sincerely told you what comfort you may have, if you will not refuse it, from the word of God, and from the experience of David, and (because things near are aptest to affect) from the experience of our deceased friend, and of myself, and; indeed, of all God's servants in their degree. You would live in

joy, you would die in joy; we need it in a life of so much trouble, and for a change that else is terrible, and it is sure and near. O sirs! we need another kind of comfort than sport, or appetite, or wealth, or any such fading vanity, will give us; you may have some of it, if you will. And though joy be the top of grace which we arrive not at with a wish, nor in an hour, yet the nature of the new creature relisheth, or savoureth, the things of the Spirit. (Rom. viii. 5—7.) And the spirit of adoption is a spirit of filial love, and crieth Abba, Father, and the love of God the Father, the grace of the Son, and the communion of the holy Spirit, which are the believer's part, are all of them the greatest comforters, and Christ giveth believers that seek and trust him, that spring of living waters which tendeth to everlasting satisfaction, and cureth indigent and sinful thirst.

Will you then have any portion, heritage, and joy, which will be worthy of a man, and shall go further with you than the grave? If you will you may; God and this congregation are witnesses that it was offered you. But think not to refuse it, and prefer the transitory pleasures of sin before it, and at last have it, and find that which you refused, or which you sought not first. (Matt. vi. 33.) Nor to find a treasure in heaven where you never laid it up, or sought it. The hopes of the wicked perish, and the hypocrite's hopes are as the giving up of the ghost; but the righteous hath hope in his death, and therefore may die in peace and joy. (Job viii. 13, 14, and xi. 20; Prov. xi. 7, and xiv. 32.)

Perhaps some will say, that such a discourse of rejoicing is unsuitable to the mourning of a funeral. I think not of such a funeral, in which we commemorate the holy life and death, and believe the present and everlasting joy, of such a friend, and one with whom we have long joined in seeking and waiting for that felicity, and hope, ere long, and for ever, to rejoice with Christ, and her, and all the blessed. And funeral sermons are not for the benefit (though for the due honour) of the dead, but of the living, to teach us all to prepare for death, which, indeed, is so much of the business of our whole life, that all the rest is but a vain show, and foolish trifling, or much worse. And wherein doth our preparation for death so much consist, as foreseeing what so great a change will need, and what a trial it will put our faith and hope to, to seek and get such security for our everlasting state, and such sound belief of it, and settled content and comfort in it, which the fears of death, judgment, and hell,

may not shake or overcome; that so we may finish our course with joy, and pass through the valley of the shadow of death, and fear no evil, but may comfort one another and ourselves with this, that we shall for ever be with the Lord, and may say with Paul, "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," which God, the righteous Judge, will give to me and to all that love Christ's appearance, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that do believe, and shall say, "Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Wo, and for ever wo, to every soul of you that shall finally reject or neglect the offer of such an heritage and joy! And blessed be that grace which hath caused all true believers to prefer it in their highest esteem, and choice, and seeking. I have looked about to see if there were any better and surer to be had, and I am fully satisfied it must be this or none. I offer you but what God hath caused me, and all that he will save, to choose; and Lord grant that I may never look back to any other! Let the love of God, my heavenly Father, the grace of Jesus Christ, my Lord, and the joy of the sanctifying Spirit, sealing up the promise of God as my security, and writing his law and gospel in my heart, be my heritage and joy, and I shall never envy the most prosperous sinner their portion in this life, but shall live and die in the thankful praise of the God of my salvation, who is essential, infinite, joyful love. Amen, Amen.

FAITHFUL SOULS

SHALL BE WITH CHRIST:

THE

CERTAINTY PROVED,

AND

THEIR CHRISTIANITY DESCRIBED AND EXEMPLIFIED,

IN THE

TRULY CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DEATH

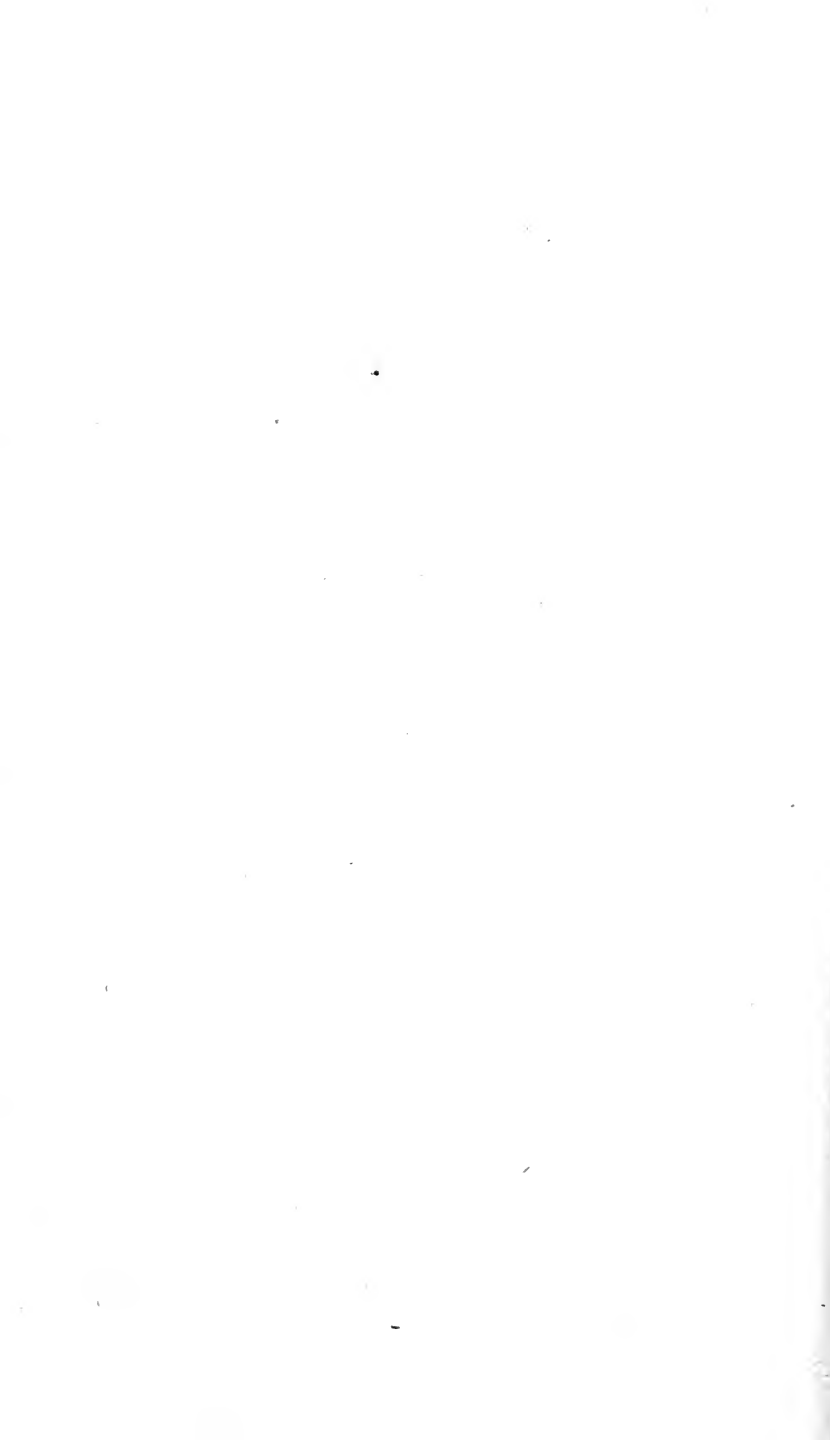
OF THAT EXCELLENT, AMIABLE SAINT

HENRY ASHHURST, ESQUIRE,

CITIZEN OF LONDON.

BRIEFLY AND TRULY PUBLISHED FOR THE CONVICTION OF HYPOCRITES AND
THE MALIGNANT, THE STRENGTHENING OF BELIEVERS, AND THE IMITATION
OF ALL, ESPECIALLY THE MASTERS OF FAMILIES IN LONDON.

“Go, and do thou likewise.”—Luke x. 27.



TO MY WORTHY FRIENDS,
MRS. JUDITH ASHHURST,

WIDOW OF HENRY ASHHURST, ESQ.

AND

MR. HENRY ASHHURST,
THEIR SON,

WITH ALL HIS BRETHREN AND SISTERS,

GRACE AND PEACE.

DEAR FRIENDS,

I AM persuaded, that the image of so good a husband and father cannot but be deeply printed on your minds ; but yet may it not be wholly needless to be told of the comfort and the duty thence to be inferred. It was you, Sir, his eldest son and executor, who called me to the public performance of that which I have thought meet to make more public. I have long known you so well, that I am comfortably persuaded, that your father had great cause to place that great affection on you, and confidence in you which he did. Your dear love to him, and great reverence of him, and hearty love to the good which he loved, and your singleness and uprightness of mind and life, are your amiableness, and better than the greatest earthly birthright. But I did purposely say little in the follow-discourse of your father's example, as consolatory and obligatory to all his nearest relations, because I thought that their special interest in him, did give them right to a special address, which is the intent of this epistle. God's Scripture blessings of the faithful and their seed, doth make this relation honourable and comfortable to you all. How cheerfully may you all follow the footsteps of one so near you, who sped so well in following Christ. The greatest comforts and blessings are the greatest obligations to further duty ; and that duty is the way to get

greater blessings. It will be some help to you to love God and goodness, good men, and all men, to remember how much all these were loved, by one who so tenderly loved yourselves. You have not only heard, but seen and felt, that holiness is not a bare name or dream, and religion a mere art or image, but a divine nature, a real renovation of heart and life, and that the effects of God's Spirit, in sanctifying souls, do greatly difference them from carnal minds. You have seen that godliness, genuine and real, is not a wearisome, uncomfortable life. Live as he did, and it will be a cure of melancholy, passions and discontents, and a constant tranquillity and delight.

What a help is his example to you, to live in true love to one another; to be of an humble, meek, and quiet spirit, neither vexatious to yourselves or others: as also to be absolutely devoted to God, of public minds, and comforts to the poor and needy, and to use all that you have as his stewards, daily preparing for your great account. You have seen how you may live above the world, even while you prosper in it; and how to expound "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John ii. 15.) "For where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also." (Matt. vi. 21.) The Spaniards have a proverb, 'The world is a carrion, and they are the dogs that love it, much more that snarl and fight about it.' One would think, that to read and believe, Matt. v. and vi; Luke xii. and xvi.; and James iv., should affright men from being deceived by such a shadow, whose speedy vanishing all foresee.

You have seen what it is to be a Christian indeed, and how your affairs, your conversations, and your families, should be ordered. And you have seen how the best may suffer and must die; and, therefore, what need we all have to be prepared with strong and well-exercised faith, hope, and patience, and, by daily conversing in the heavenly regions, to get sweeter thoughts of heaven than of the most prosperous state on earth, that we may die like serious believers, and joyfully commit our departing souls to Christ, when we leave these corruptible bodies to the grave. O dear friends, the day is at hand; the day is at hand; the change is of unspeakable importance; the work of faith and hope is high and difficult! Set to it speedily with heart and might, and let not flesh and the world entangle and deceive you.

The great love which your father had to me, and much more

which he had to Christ, his church, and all the faithful, obliged me to be the larger in describing his example for your use and comfort; for as Christ, gone to heaven, hath left here his servants, called his brethren, that men in them may show their love and thankfulness to him, which he will reward as done unto himself, so the way which I must take to express my love and gratitude to your deceased father is by desiring and endeavouring the true felicity of his wife and children, whom he so dearly loved; and that must be, by taking God for your God and Father; Christ for your Saviour; the holy Spirit for your Sanctifier; the holy Scriptures for your rule; the church for the body of which you are members; true pastors for your teachers; the faithful for your most beloved companions; (especially each other who are by so many bonds obliged to more than ordinary endearedness and love;) and Christ for your chief pattern, and such as your father in following him; heaven for your felicity, home, and hope; and this short life for the day of your preparation and salvation; and the world, flesh, and devil, so far as they are against any of this, for the enemies which, with all vigilancy and resolution, must be overcome.

Oh! how great, how good, and absolutely necessary a work is this, which if any one of you should miscarry about, you would be more inexcusable than most persons in the world! But that you will all faithfully imitate such an example of holiness, humility, meekness, mortification, peace, and dearest love to one another, and to all good men, is the comfortable hope and hearty prayer, as it is the present faithful counsel of

Your servant for such ends,

RICHARD BAXTER.

December 7, 1680.

FAITHFUL SOULS SHALL BE WITH CHRIST,

&c. &c.

JOHN xii. 26.

If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

IF our judgments and wills had been the choosers and disposers of human events, as the affairs of the world would be otherwise managed than they are; so the meeting of this day would rather have been for a joyful thanksgiving for our deceased friend's recovery to health than a mourning solemnizing of his funeral; but it is not we that made the world, or our own or others' souls, and it is not our right to determine of their time and events. It is one prime Agent, supreme Ruler, and ultimate end; one that is infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness, who is omnipresent, immutable, and every way perfect, that must actuate, order, and bless a world of such imperfect and differing individuals; and not such ignorant understandings, such partial and ill-guided wills, and such impotent powers as ours are: he that maketh the watch, determineth how many hours it shall go. The giver of life and time, must give us the measures of it; it is our part to spend it well: it is because the Creator having left us to some liberty and trust about ourselves, we are the misusers of it, that there are so many disorders, and, consequently, calamities, in the world, and on ourselves and ours, as there are. And if the God of love did not keep the overruling determination in his hand, and bring good out of all our evil, and harmony out of our discords and confusions, what a chaos, or hell, would the world become! Let us, therefore, humbly and willingly leave God's own work to himself, (he will do all well, and at last we shall understand it,) and let us mind our own. He hath taken up our brother's soul from earth: it is our part to think how to improve this; our own are following: our

hour is at hand: our oil is wasting apace: our glass is almost run; every pulse, every breath, every word leaveth us one less of the number appointed us. It is our great concern to look inwards, and look upwards, and with our utmost diligence to study how to spend the short time that remaineth, that we may die in safety, peace, and hope, and follow the departed saints to glory.

To instruct myself and you herein, I have chosen this text, as giving us both sure directions, and such great and comfortable promises as in life, and at death, we may boldly trust.

They are spoken by no doubtful messenger, but by the mouth of Christ himself; and that to men who were under our temptations, and earnestly desired to see Christ glorified on earth, and to partake of outward greatness here; to see that famous man who had wrought so many miracles, and lately raised the dead. But he tells them that both he and they must die before they can be glorified, and that they must overcome the inordinate love of this life, if ever they would attain a life of blessedness; (John xii. 23—25;) and that they might not, by uncertainty of the end or way, say, as Philip, "We know not whither thou goest, and how shall we know the way," he summarily tells them both; the way is to serve him, and follow him; the end that is promised is, to be where he is, and to be honoured of his Father.

As if he should say, 'I know that your weakness and remaining carnality is such, that you would fain see me reign as an universal king on earth, that you might be advanced by me in the flesh; and it is a hard lesson to you to learn to lay down this life, which is so dear to you, and to pass into a world which you never saw, and know so little of. But have I not, by my doctrine, life, and frequent miracles, and newly by raising Lazarus from the dead, convinced you that I am the true Messiah, sent of God, to whom you may boldly trust the conduct and disposal of your lives and souls? If so, then see that you absolutely trust me, learn of me, serve me, and follow me. And let this satisfy you living and dying, that you shall speed as I myself do, and be with me where I am, though the place and state be yet unseen to you; and there you shall, by my Father, be advanced to far greater dignity and honour, than in this sinful life and world you are capable of. And of all this I give here my promise, which you must believe and trust, if you will be saved by me.'

This is the plain exposition of the text. But let us more distinctly inquire. I. What is here meant by serving Christ. II. What it is to follow him. And, afterwards, III. What it is to be where he is. IV. And what to be honoured by his Father.

I. Some, that by false and narrow notions have received a wrong opinion of saving faith, may be puzzled at this, that serving Christ and following him are made the necessary terms or conditions of being where he is. And some say, that justifying faith, and saving faith, are two different things; and some say, that Christ himself did not clearly preach the doctrine of justification by faith, but left it for St. Paul. But the plain truth is, that in the gospel it is all one, to be a believer, a Christian, and a disciple of Christ, in covenant with him as the true Messiah. And in those times the disciples of any great and famous teachers were taken into their families, and were their servants; not in a worldly common work, but in order to the ends of their office and instructions; it is the same word which we often translate "deacons;" and as it was then usual with Jews and heathens, at their great feasts, for the servitors to give every guest his part, by the appointment of the ruler of the feast; so the Spirit, by the apostles, did institute church deacons to be servants to distribute the provisions made at their love-feasts, and the proportions allowed for each one's relief, to look to the poor, and to execute such church orders as the present bishops or elders did appoint (by which you may see how big the bishop's church then was). And so Christ calleth all Christians his deacons, ministers, or servants, and some above others, peculiarly in office, as those that were to serve him as the Saviour of the world, for their own and men's salvation; as his relation to us partaketh by analogy of many, so is our service to him. It is as the service of a scholar in obedient and diligent humble learning; as the obedience of a patient to his physician; as the obedience of a beggar in asking, and thankfully accepting; as the obedience of a malefactor, who thankfully taketh a pardon; and if a rebel, promiseth to lay down arms, and live in true subjection to his prince; as the service of a child that liveth dependently in dutiful gratitude and love. It is not to give Christ any thing that he needeth; but to be readier to hear him, than to offer him the sacrifice of fools, who, by thinking to oblige him by their gifts, do but offend him.

The matter of our required service is, 1. To confess, with grief, our sin, our misery, and our need of him, his grace and mercy.

2. To learn, understand, and believe his word.

3. Thereby to know God, from whom we were revolted; and to return to him in the hand of our Mediator, by absolute resignation, devotion, and subjection; to obey, and trust, and love him, and joyfully to hope for everlasting happiness in his love.

4. To give up ourselves to Christ as our Saviour, by his sacrifice, merits, teaching, government, and intercession; to bring us home to God, by justifying, sanctifying, and finally glorifying us.

5. To obey the motions of his Spirit to that end, which are but to bring us to a conformity of his word.

6. To love God in his saints and creatures, and do all the good to one another that we can, and cherish a holy unity and peace, and to do wrong to none.

7. To watch against and resist all the temptations of the flesh, the world, and the devil, which would draw us from any of this duty.

8. To bear our medicinal corrections patiently and profitably, and pray, seek, and wait for blessed immortality.

9. To pray long, and labour for the public good, the church's welfare, and the conversion of the dark, unbelieving world.

10. To do all this for the glorifying of God and our Redeemer, and the pleasing of his holy will, as the end and only rest of souls.

This is the service which Christ requireth; and is there any thing in all this which is not safe, delightful, honourable, profitable, and exceedingly desirable, to every one that knoweth what it is to hope for happiness, and to live like a Christian or a man?

II. And what is it that is meant by following Christ? Disciples then were wont to dwell with their Master, that they might be always at hand to do what he bid them.

To follow Christ, includeth, 1. The absolute taking him for the guide and Saviour, to whom we trust our bodies and souls. 2. The obedient following of his instruction and commands. 3. The following of his example, in all the imitable parts of his life. 4. The submissive following him through all the sufferings wherewith God trieth us, and by what death he chooseth for us, into the heavenly mansions, whither he is ascended.

This is the following of Christ, which the straits of this hour allow me but to name.

Use. Before we proceed, let us consider how to improve what is said, and open the two promises after in our application.

I. And, first, it is hence evident what it is to be indeed a Christian: it is to serve and follow Christ in trust, as the Procurer, the Captain, the Giver of salvation. Our relation to him, by a sacred covenant and vow is the thing from which we are named Christians. Deceitful covenanting may give us the name among men, that cannot see the heart, and may deceive ourselves and others. But if the soul consent not, God doth not consent to justify or save us. O sirs! try quickly, try faithfully, before death say, 'It is now too late,' whether you are such as God, as well as men, will judge to be Christians indeed. Oh! be not self-deceivers, for God will not be mocked with names and shadows, and heartless words, and the false pretences of a worldly, fleshly, un sanctified mind. You will find one day that Christ came not to be a shadow, nor a steppingstone to worldly ends, nor a patron of pride and fleshly lusts. You will find, ere long, that to be a Christian is a great and serious business, on which lieth the everlasting saving of our souls; greater than life or death, crowns and kingdoms, or any concerns of this corruptible flesh; a business which will not be done asleep, nor with a careless mind, nor with a slothful, unresolved soul, nor with the thoughts and hours which pride and vanity can spare, and which are the leavings of fleshly lusts and pleasures. To be a Christian is to turn our backs on all these deceitful vanities and sinful pleasures, and to place our absolute trust in Christ, and to serve and follow him to the death, in hope of everlasting glory obtained by his manifold grace. Have you no careful thoughts of another life; and no fear what will become of your departing souls at death? If not, your reason is asleep. If you have, what is it that quieteth and comforteth you? Is it only a careless venture, because God is merciful, as if his mercy saved all? God forbid that your souls should go out of your bodies, without a better preparation than this! But if finding yourselves undone by sin, and liable to God's destroying justice, and believing that Christ is the only sufficient and faithful Saviour, you give up soul and body in trust to him, resolvedly consenting to serve and follow him who hath purchased and promised you blessedness with himself. This is true Christianity, and this is a trust which will not deceive. Sirs, you send for us in sickness, and perhaps we

cannot come, or we find men overwhelmed with pain and fear, and with a feeble body, and fainting spirits, unfit to try and judge themselves, and to do so great a work as is here described, if not unable to hear much discourse of it. Oh! what a sad time is that for a minister to give you that instruction, which a long time of strength was too little to improve. What a dreadful thing is it for a soul then to have all the work that you lived for to begin and do, and for to have but a sick and fainting hour or day to do that which you could not do in all your lives, and which turneth the key for heaven or hell. The Lord give you awakened reason and wisdom before it be too late! The name of Christian is not to be used to deceive fleshly men into damning presumption, but to signify a soul that trusteth in Christ and followeth him in obedience and patience to salvation.

O that you all feelingly knew how much it concerneth you, presently to set home and resolve this question, 'Do I trust, serve, and follow Christ?' Let us now look a little to his footsteps, that we may know.

1. Christ lived in the world to do his Father's work and will, to glorify and please him. (See John iv. 34, and ix. 4, and viii. 29, and xii. 27, 28, and xvii. 4.) Is it God's work that you live for, and his will that you chiefly study to please in your inferior degree and place?

2. Christ was the greatest lover of souls. His business on earth was to seek and save them, and he is still about that work in heaven. He thought not his strange condescending incarnation, his sufferings and heart-blood, his labour and life, too dear to save them. Are your own and others' souls thus precious in your eyes? Do you think no labour loss, no cost or suffering too dear to save yourselves and others? Do your prayers and your practices prove this to be true?

3. Christ's great work was to gather a church on earth, which should be his peculiar kingdom, spouse, and body, to glorify God, and be glorified with him. (Eph. iv. 1—17, and v. 25—32, and iii. 21; Acts xx. 28.) If you are Christians indeed, Christ's church is to you as your body to the members, that are all ready to serve it, abhorring abscission and separation from it, and every painful, perilous disease.

You love, you long, you pray for the true enlargement, concord, and holy prosperity of the church: that God's name may be hallowed, his kingdom come, and his will done on earth as it

is in heaven, is the first and chief of your desires. (See 1 Cor. xiii.; Col. i. 18, 24.) Are you thus followers of Christ?

4. Love to God and man was the very nature and life and work of Christ; manifested in constant doing good, and praying for his persecutors, and reconciling enemies to God. (Rom. v. 8—10; 2 Cor. v. 19, 20; John xv. 13; Mark x. 21; John xv. 9; Gal. ii. 20; Eph. ii. 4.) And if you follow Christ, love will be you nature, life, and work, and you will walk in love as Christ loved us. (Eph. v. 2; 1 John iv. 11.) Even as he hath loved us, he requireth that we love one another, (John xiii. 34, and xv. 9, 12,) which is not with a barren, unprofitable love. (James ii. 14, &c.; John xiii. 35.)

5. In order to these ends, Christ lived quite above all the pomps and vanities of the world, and above the love of worldly dominion and fleshly pleasure, and life itself; and refused not to die a shameful death, as a reputed malefactor, to redeem us, "Making himself of no reputation, enduring the cross and despising the shame. (Phil. ii. 7, 10; 1 Pet. iii. 18, and iv. 1.) And if you follow Christ, though you must not be cross makers, you must be cross bearers, and above the love of worldly vanity, and life itself in comparison of eternal life. For Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, (1 Pet. ii. 21,) and will have us take up our cross and follow him, forsaking all that stands against him, (Luke xiv. 29, 32, 33,) and submit to be in our flesh partakers of his sufferings. (1 Pet. iv. 13.) We cannot equal him in patience, but we must so far imitate him, as not to sin and forsake the truth for fear of suffering, nor to account our lives dear, that we may finish our course with joy. (Matt. v. 11, 12; Acts xx. 24.)

6. Christ, though he were the Lord of all the world, did condescend to a humble, low condition, and chose not a prince's court for converse, but the poor, and men of low degree. And he hath commanded us to learn of him to be meek and lowly, (Matt. xi. 29,) and to be the servants of all, as that which is above worldly greatness. (Mark ix. 35; and x. 44.) And he blesseth the meek, and the poor in spirit. (Matt. v.) Do we follow him in this? And condescend to men of low estate, (Rom. xii. 16,) remembering that not many great and noble are called, (1 Cor. i. 26,) and that God hath chosen the poor of the world, that are rich in faith, to be heirs of his kingdom; (Jam. ii. 5; 1 Cor. i. 27, 28;) or do you not as those reprov'd,

(Jam. iv.) show a worldly, carnal mind, by too much valuing the high and rich, and too much vilifying the poor? Our flesh and health is nearer us far than our clothes and riches. And yet how far is flesh and strength from making a bad man more valuable and amiable than a weak and sickly saint.

7. Though Christ was the greatest lover of souls, yet was he the greatest hater of sin: so great that he came into the world to destroy it, as the devil's work; and would rather die than sin should not be condemned and die, (1 John iii. 7, 8; Matt. i. 21,) and to save men from it was his office. And for all his meekness, he forbearth not to call Herod fox, and sharply reprove the scribes and Pharisees, (Matt. xxiii,) yea, and to give Peter the rebuke which he gave the devil, when he did his work, by dissuading him from his sufferings: "Get thee behind me, Satan." (Matt. xvi.)

And if we look on sin as a harmless thing, and the profit, honour, or pleasures reconcile us to it, and we are indifferent towards it on pretence of moderation and avoiding rash zeal and indiscretion; this is not to be followers, but enemies of Christ, reproaching his office and cross, as if he had needlessly been born and died.

8. A heavenly mind and life is the chief imitation of Christ: his kingdom was not of this world; his glory is at the right hand of the Father: and our glory must be in seeing his glory. (John xvii. 22, 24.) It is in heaven that he promiseth his followers a reward. (Matt. v. 12; Heb. xi. 16, and xii. 22; Luke xvi. 9, and xxiii. 43.) And it is in heaven that our treasure must be laid up, and our hearts, affections, and hopes must be set, and our conversation must be. (Matt. vi. 19—21; Col. iii. 1, 3, 4; Phil. iii. 19, 20.)

You see now what it is to be followers of Christ: is this your case? I mean not in degree, but in sincere imitation. O try and judge!

Use 2. Whatever it hath been, shall it be so for the time to come? O that this might be a day of effectual resolution and engagement to us all! Do I need to tell you that it is not Christ that leadeth men to gluttony or drunkenness, or chambering and wantonness, to idleness, and pride, and worldly vanity, and fleshly lust? (Rom. xiii. 13; Gal. v. 21, 22; Rom. viii. 1, &c.) It is not Christ that teacheth men to doubt of the immortality of the soul, and of the life to come, and of the truth of the gospel: nor is it Christ that teacheth them to play the

hypocrite, and scorn and hate and persecute the serious practice of that religion which their tongues profess : these are the works of the devil, which Christ came to destroy. O bethink you whom you follow, and whither you go, before you come to your journey's end. The world, flesh, and devil have undone all that ever followed them to the end. But if you will serve Christ and follow him, I will tell you what encouragements you have.

1. You have the greatest and most honourable master in all the world, that is able to make good all his undertakings.

2. You have the surest, infallible leader, that never was deceived nor did deceive, nor hath he need of deceit to govern us.

3. You have love itself to lead you ; one that hath done more than all the world besides can do, to show you that he loveth you, and therefore doth all for your good.

4. You have a humbled, condescending leader ; God in flesh, that hath spoken face to face with man, and came near us to bring us up to God.

5. You have a plain, familiar teacher, who hath not set your wits on artificial, logical tricks, like the undoing of a pair of tarrying irons, but hath brought light and immortality to light, and taught us to know God and our everlasting hopes, and a safe and joyful way thereto.

6. And yet you have a complete, perfect teacher, who teacheth you by words and works and inspiration, and can make you what he bids you be, and leaveth out nothing that is necessary to your salvation.

7. And you have the only sufficient guide to happiness. He is the way, the truth, and the life ; and no man cometh to the Father but by him. No man but he hath revealed the God and glory which he hath fully seen and known. All men are liars and deceivers, not to be trusted, further than some way they have learned of him, by the teaching of his works, or word, or Spirit.

And now shall we need to say more to men, that are already vowed to Christ in their baptism, who profess themselves Christians, who know that they must die, and who know that there is no other hope or way, to persuade them to be what they profess, that they may not miss of what they hope for ? But the following promises, if believed, will persuade you.

III. "Where I am there shall my servant be." They that serve and follow Christ, shall, in their measure, speed as he

doth, and be with him where he is. Quest. And where is that? Answ. It is certainly in no ill place: though it be a controversy, whether Christ descended to hell, it is certain that now he is not there; and therefore his members shall not be there. He is certainly in Paradise, for there he promised the converted thief to be that day with him. He is in heaven. (Acts i. 11.) This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. (Acts iii. 21.) "Whom the heaven must receive till the time of restitution of all things." (John xvii.) "And now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self." (Verse xiii.) "And now I come to thee." It is in the glorious presence of God that Christ now abideth in our nature: even at the right hand of God. (Matt. xxvi. 64; Mark xiv. 62, and xvi. 19; Luke xxii. 6, 9; Acts vii. 55, 56; Rom. viii. 34; Eph. i. 20; Col. iii. 1; Heb. i. 3, 13, and viii. 1, and xii. 2, and x. 12; 1 Pet. iii. 22.)

Therefore, though many texts do seem to intimate that he will return to earth again, and that the new Jerusalem shall come down from heaven, and that we look for a new heaven and earth in which righteousness shall dwell, yet these texts do fully prove that faithful souls go presently to Christ who is in heaven, and that there will be no such descent to earth as shall be any diminution of the glory of the saints; for it shall be no diminution of the glory of Christ; and we shall be where Christ will be. If heaven come down to earth, and the veil be drawn, it will be no loss.

2. That departed, faithful souls go to him, the Scripture elsewhere also tells us. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." (John xvii. 24.) "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.) When we "fail" here, we shall "be received into" the everlasting habitations. (Luke xvi. 9.) "The beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom," (v. 22,) "now he is comforted." (Ver. 25.) "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." (2 Cor. v. 1, 8.) "We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the

Lord." (Ver. viii.) "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain—having a desire to depart to be with Christ, which is far better." (Phil. i. 21, 22.) "We are come to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly, and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant." (Heb. xii. 22—24.) "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." (Rev. xiv. 13.)

I heap all these texts together for myself as well as you, that we may see that as the faithful shall certainly have a blessed resurrection, so their departing souls at death shall certainly be with Christ in glory. For I take the assurance of the soul's immortality, and felicity at death, to be a point that deserveth as much of our thoughtful diligence, as any one that we have to think of. He is mad that doubteth whether there be a God, if he live with his eyes open in the world: and as for Christianity, it is life and immortality which Christ came to secure us of and bring to light. And he that by the light of nature doth but believe the soul's immortality and a life of retribution, is much prepared to be a Christian; so suitable will he find Christianity to our everlasting interest.

But yet all will be dark to men, and seem uncertain till Christ be their teacher, and they truly believe in him, and take it on his certain word.

Truly believe that Jesus is the Christ, and his gospel true, and there is no room for a doubt of the immortality of souls, and future blessedness, so plainly is it expressed in all the gospel. The Socinians, that look for nothing till the resurrection, dream of a dreaming sleep of souls, but dare not talk of any cessation or annihilation of them. For then a resurrection is a contradiction, another soul may be created, but it cannot be the same that was annihilated.

And as no man can believe that Christ speaketh truth and is Christ indeed, but he must needs believe his promise that the faithful soul shall be where he is, so no man can truly believe that all faithful souls, and only such, shall be with Christ and partake of blessedness, but it will constrain him to a life of serious holiness at least, if it feast him not with the foretaste of heavenly joys. Can you imagine that any man can firmly be-

lieve that all and only holy souls go to Christ in glory when they leave the body, and yet not seek first the kingdom of God, and make the securing of this his chiefest care and business in the world? It cannot be: every man loveth himself; and no man can be indifferent whether his soul be in heaven or hell for ever. Dulness and present diverting things, may make a man negligent and inconsiderate about lesser matters, where the loss seemeth tolerable; but I cannot believe that if a man be awake and in his wits, any thing but secret unbelief and doubting can make one so dull or inconsiderate about his everlasting joy or misery, as not to make it his chiefest care. For I see that if a man have but a law-suit, on which all his estate depends, or a trial on which his life depends, he cannot forget it or make light of it: he will not drink or jest or play away the little time in which his business must be done. And can any one soundly believe that his soul at death shall go to Christ in glory, and not set more by such a hope than by all the riches, and sport, and pleasure, and vain-glory of so short a life as this? Or can any man soundly believe that the wicked and unholy shall go to everlasting punishment, and yet not make it his chief care to escape it? Sure, as mad and bad as man's corrupted mind is, this will scarce stand with human nature. I judge of others by myself: if I had never had at the worst a secret uncertainty whether the gospel be true, and souls immortal, I might have been surprised indeed to a sudden temptation to some sin, but I could never have thought that a man in his wits should choose any life but resolved holiness; nor could I have chosen any other.

If I see a man a careless neglecter of his soul, that maketh no great matter of sin or duty, or maketh not God, and Christ, and heaven the subject of his most serious ruling thoughts, and his greatest business in the world; but showeth us that his health, and wealth, and honour, and pleasure are better loved and more earnestly sought, and faster held; I will not believe that this man taketh the gospel and the soul's future state therein described, to be a certain truth; let him say what he will, he doubteth of it at his heart: and such men use to say when they speak out, 'I know what I have here, but I know not what I shall have hereafter: could I keep what I have, I would let others take what is promised in heaven.'

But, O man, thou knowest thou canst not keep what thou hast! Shortly thy soul must be required and called away, and

then whose are the things which thou hast loved? (Luke xii. 19, 20.)

I will therefore say more. Though men had no certainty of dwelling with Christ, and doubted whether his word be true, yet it were worse than madness not to prefer the bare probability (that I say not possibility) of a future endless glory, (when endless misery is probable to the refusers,) before all here that can be set against it. Oh! what is this transitory dream of worldly, fleshly pleasure to everlasting joy or misery! Verily every man at his best estate (in worldly respects) is altogether vanity. (Psalm xxxix. 5.) Oh! mark how emphatical every word is. Verily (it is no doubt) every man high and low, good and bad, in bodily and worldly respects only, at his best or settled estate (not only in pain, and poverty, and age, but in his strength, and wit, and wealth, and honour, on the throne as well as on the dunghill) is vanity. That is an untrusty lie and shadow that seemeth something and is next to nothing, and this altogether (in mere worldly, corporal respects, in all that he hath to glory or take pleasure in.) What need we more to prove all this, than to foresee how the dream and tragedy endeth? A little while we run up and down, and eat and drink, and talk and sport, and sometimes laugh, and sometimes weep, and then change our pomp and pride for a shroud and coffin, and are laid to rot in a grave of earth, where these idol, pampered bodies, be turned themselves into the quality of their darksome habitation. And if these were our best, were not every man at his best estate altogether vanity?

And if a mere probability of the life to come, in reason should resolve all men for serious holiness, how can we think that a certain or firm belief would not do it?

By this, then, it is past doubt, that hypocrisy reigneth in all mere, nominal Christians, and in all that live not a holy life, and, indeed, in most men in the world. They are false in professing to believe, that Christ is true, and his gospel certain truth, and that at death they must go to heaven or hell, if their lives show not that heaven and hell are greater, and more prevailing matters with them, than all the fleshly provisions, pleasures, and glory of this world.

Hypocrites are distinguished from professed infidels; but if they were not unbelievers at the heart, they were not hypocrites in professing faith. The Scripture giveth these titles or attributes therefore to saving faith; it is called, "faith unfeigned,"

or not hypocritical; (1 Tim. i. 5;) and (Philem. 6) it is called "effectual;" and (Gal. v. 6) "Faith that works by love;" and (James ii.) "Faith that is not dead, but working to perfection;" it is not "unfeigned," if it be not "effectual." You cannot make a man believe that a bear pursueth him, or his house is on fire, or his life in danger, but he will accordingly bestir himself. You cannot draw a man to other business from the care of his life, if he believe that it lieth on his present care.

O sirs, the hypocrite's belief of another world, and his lifeless opinion, conquered by secret unbelief, will shortly fall as an house built on the sand; (Matt. vii. 23;) and no heart can now fully conceive how terrible to him the fall will be. When you see that there is no more tarrying here, and that death and an endless life are come, a dead profession, and secret unbelief, will leave you then to despair and horror. It is not the name of a Christian that will then serve to comfort, or to save your souls. I do not say, that no man shall be saved that hath any doubting, even of the gospel and the life to come; but I say, you cannot be saved, if your belief of it prevail not to engage you in a holy life, and conquer not the flesh, the world, and the devil. It must be a prevailing faith.

But, I suppose, you are convinced, that a sound and firm belief of the passage of departing souls to Christ, or unto misery, would certainly resolve men for a holy life; but some say, 'If we be uncertain, how can we help it? We are out of sight, and we have not the command of our own understandings. We would be sure what becomes of souls' with all our hearts, but we cannot attain it.'

Answ. Christ came into the world to teach it us; such knowledge is too high and precious to be attained with a slothful wish, or to be had without the use of the means which Christ hath appointed us. Have you learned of Christ, with a humble and teachable, willing mind? Have you not been diverted and blinded by the things which you knew were but deceitful vanity? Have you set your understandings a work with such serious consideration, and so long as the trial of so great a matter doth require? Have you sought to able and faithful ministers of Christ to help you where you found yourself insufficient? Have you daily begged the help of the Spirit of God, as knowing that heavenly things must be discerned by a heavenly light? Have you honestly obeyed so much as you did know? If you have done this, which reason requireth, I do not think that thus

waiting on God, he will leave you to any damnable unbelief, or to an unholy, sensual life.

But because the strengthening of our belief herein is the most needful thing, even to the best, both for their hope, and joy, and duty, and all that understand themselves must earnestly desire, that their belief of the gospel, and the life to come, did reach to a satisfying certainty; I will shortly repeat the proofs that must ascertain us, though I have largely done it in my books called 'The Life of Faith,' and 'The Reasons of the Christian Religion,' and 'The Unreasonableness of Infidelity;' I care not how oft (when necessary) I repeat them, and wish that they were more of the daily study of those that now study controversies, or only superstructures.

I. And first, nature giveth us these arguments to prove man's future state.

1. God hath made man with an essential capacity, to think and care, as his greatest concern, what shall become of his soul when he dieth; and God maketh none of his works in vain, much less so noble a one as man.

2. A bare probability of the life to come, as now revealed, with our certainty of the brevity and vanity of this life, maketh it the interest and certain duty of all men in the world, to be far more careful for their future state, than for the body, and this present life. He liveth against reason that doeth not this.

3. And can a wise man believe that God bindeth all men, by their essential reason, to make the care of a thing that is not, or ever shall be, to be the chief business of their lives, and that deceit and falsehood should be the guide of all our greatest actions, and man should be made to follow a lie, to his everlasting disappointment? Judge reasonably, whether this be like to be the work of the most great and wise and holy God.

4. History and experience assureth us, that it is the expectation of a life to come, the hope of reward there, and the fear of punishment, which are God's means, for the actual government of mankind. And though many atheists are in the world, and more Sadducees and unbelievers, yet few, if any, are wholly such, but have consciences that keep them in some awe; and laws and professed religion tell you, that it is hopes and fears of another life, which are the ruling principles; which, as they reign in the best, so few of the worst will directly contradict; and were it not for such fears of punishment hereafter, the lives of no princes or enemies would be safe from destroying malice,

policy, or power. And is it likely that this world is governed by a lie, by that God who wants no power, wisdom, or love, to govern it by truth; and who maketh the best men the greatest haters of lying, that they may be like him?

5. And how comes the belief of the soul's immortality to be so common a principle in the nature of man, if it be not true?

II. But seeing it is the gospel that must give us the full and satisfying certainty, keep these few evidences of its truth continually printed on your minds.

1. Remember that promises, types, and prophecies foretold Christ's coming long before; even prophecies sealed with miracles and fulfilled.

2. Remember that Christ's own person and doctrine did bear that image of God, which is unimitable; and had that power, wisdom, and love, which prove them to be of God. God's image and superscription discernible by holy minds, doth difference the gospel from all the words of fallible men.

3. Remember that it was proved to be of God, by multitudes of open and uncontrolled miracles; and God will not work miracles remedilessly to deceive mankind, especially the great miracle of Christ's resurrection, (long by him foretold,) and his visible ascending up to heaven.

4. The sending down the promised Spirit on the apostles, and on other believers then, for languages, miracles, prophesyings, &c.; and the long exercise of these tongues and miracles by many, and in many parts of the world, and the gathering of the churches by them.

5. The full and certain historical conveyance of these matters of fact to us, in and by the sacred Scriptures, church ordinances, and tradition, (as the statutes of the land are delivered us,) without any weakening contradiction of the said history or fact.

6. Above all, the continued testimony of God's Spirit in all true believers, that is, the same Spirit which endited the Scripture, writeth it out on all holy souls, or formeth, reneweth, and disposeth them to answerable holiness; even to the image of God, in holy light, and love, and life, and to a heavenly mind and conversation, and to be sober, just, and loving to all. And God would never bless a lie, to do the greatest work in this world, to make men good and like himself; and, remember, that the whole frame and tendency of the Spirit's sanctifying work on souls, is to prepare them for a life to come, by

causing them to believe it, desire it, hope for it, and seek it, and hate sin, and part with any thing to obtain it. All sound believers have this work upon them, and are of such a mind and spirit; and this spirit or holy nature in them, is Christ's witness and theirs. They have the witness in themselves. (1 John v. 10.)

7. And remember that even the malice of Satan affordeth us much help to confirm our faith. It is notorious that he keepeth up through all the world a war against Christ, and against our hopes of future glory. How he followeth men with inward, importunate temptations against their own interest and reason, and what proof of his malice we have in human wickedness, and in witches, witchcrafts, or operations on bodies, apparitions, &c., I have so often proved to you that I will now forbear the repetition. And doth not all this contain assuring evidence of the truth of Christ, his gospel, and our future hopes?

Use. Come, then, fellow-Christians. Let us pray, "Lord, increase our faith;" let us detest all suggestions which tend to unbelief, and so would bring us to the rank of brutes, and to despair; let us live according to our most holy faith, and show ourselves and others that we heartily believe that the servants of Christ that follow him, shall be with him where he is. Oh, pray for faith! Meditate for faith. Lament your unbelief. O fools that we are, and slow of heart to believe a gospel so revealed and confirmed! Why are we so fearful of dying, O we of little faith! Were but this one text written on our hearts, and turned into faith and hope, yea, did we believe Christ speaking it but as confidently as we believe and trust a parent, or a tried friend, for any thing promised which is in their power, yea, or but as confidently as we can trust their love without a promise, oh, how joyfully should we live and die! Oh! bend your prayers and best endeavours against the unbelief and doubtings of the gospel, and the unseen world. Were your faith here strong, it would bring you to that holiness which would much end your doubts of your own sincerity and part in Christ.

Had we nothing else to prove the sinful weakness of our faith, but our uncomfortable thoughts of the life to come, and the state of our departing souls, alas! how sad an evidence is it. Come on then, Christians. Think further what this text containeth, and beg of God that you and I may believe it as we need, and as Christ deserveth to be believed. Think what it is to be with Christ. We shall be with our compassionate, great

High Priest; with him that came down in flesh to us; with him that loved us to the death, and redeemed us by his blood to God, and will make us kings and priests for ever. We shall be with him that is gone to prepare a place for us; in his Father's house he hath many mansions. (John xiv. 3.) It was not a mere man; it was not an angel that made us this promise, but the Son of God, who hath confirmed it by four seals, his blood, his miracles and resurrection, his sacraments, and his Spirit.

Are you afraid that your souls shall die with your bodies? Christ is not dead, and we shall be with him. It is his promise, "Because I live, ye shall live also." (John xiv. 19.) The article of his descending to Hades, called hell, is to tell us that Christ's soul died not with his body, yea, it went that day to Paradise. Our Head and we shall not be separated. Are you afraid of going to hell? Christ is not there. Are you afraid lest God forsake you? He forsaketh not Christ, though, for our sakes, he once in part forsook him that we might not be forsaken.

Can you fear devils, or any enemies? Where Christ is glorified, there come no devils, enemies, or fears. We are here with him as chickens under the wings of the hen. (Matt. xxiii. 37.) How safely and how joyfully then shall we be lodged in the bosom of eternal love!

But we see not the place, nor what our departed friends enjoy. But Christ seeth it, who is there.

But we see not Christ. But firm belief will make us love him, and rejoice with unspeakable, glorifying joy. (1 Pet. vi. 8, 9.)

But we cannot conceive of the state and operations of a separated soul, nor where it is, nor how God is there enjoyed.

But is it not enough to believe that we shall be with Christ, and fare (in our measure) no worse than he? If you are afraid lest Christ be deceived, or deceive you, that is a sinful fear indeed. But if you only fear lest you have no part in him, consent to his covenant, do but give up yourselves in obedience and trust, though not in perfection, yet in sincere desire and resolution, and then you have no just cause to fear it.

O sirs, why do not our hearts rejoice, when we think that we shall shortly be with Christ? Here we have ill company too oft; implacable enemies, unsuitable and sinful friends, and worst of all, a foolish and perverted heart, that is in effect our greatest enemy. But where Christ is, none of this is so. With

him we shall have the company of our holy, departed friends; even all of them that we conversed with in the flesh, whom we lamented and wept over as if they had been lost. We shall with Christ have the company of innumerable angels, and all the faithful from the days of Adam.

And oh! how much better will Christ's own glorious presence be, than his presence in humbled flesh was to his followers on earth. Here Christ was a despised, crucified man. There even his body is more glorious than the sun, and the heaven or holy city needs no sun, because God and the Lamb is the light thereof. Spirits are there in confirmed holiness, and not left to that imperfect liberty of will, which lets in by abuse all sin and misery on the world. They strive not in the dark in ignorant zeal, or mixtures of error and selfish partiality as we do here. There are no silencers of the holy ministers that continually sing Jehovah's praises. There is no malignant calumny or persecution, no envious reproach of one another, or striving who shall have his will, or be master of the rest. But holy love uniteth, animateth, and delighteth all, for it is God that they love in one another. There is no selfish, foolish fear lest individuation cease, and saints shall be too much one, and all be one common soul. In a word, to be with Christ is to be perfect in holiness and glory, in God, in the heavenly society, in the joys of sight, and love, and praise, delivered from the bondage of corruption, from sin and fear, and from temptation and troubles of all our enemies.

IV. But yet the promise here saith more, "If any man serve me, him will my Father honour." The Father's love did give us the Redeemer, and the Father's love shall glorify us with him. What is the honour that is here meant? Honour sometimes signifieth advancement in general, making one great and happy. (Numb. xxii. 17, 37, and xxiv. 11, and xxvii. 20; 1 Kings iii. 13; 1 Chron. xvi. 27; Psalm viii. 5; 1 Sam. ii. 30.) And sometimes it signifieth the provision and maintenance which is due to deserving superiors, which is half the double honour due to the elders that rule well, especially that labour in the word and doctrine. (1 Tim. v. 17.) And sometimes it is taken for a magnified, praised state. God will honour faithful Christians all these ways; he will advance them to the highest dignity they are meet for; he will give them the most bounteous provisions of his household, even more than they can now desire or believe. He will make them kings and priests to God, and

coheirs with Christ in the glorious inheritance. (Rom. viii. 17; Rev. i. 6, and v. 10, and xx. 6.) They shall judge the world, and angels. (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.) They shall see God, (Matt. v.,) and be called his children, and all together the spouse and body of Christ. (Eph. v.; Rev. xxi. and xxii., &c.) They shall at Christ's appearing (who is their life) appear with him in glory. (Col. iii. 4.) When he cometh to be admired in his saints, and glorified in all them that believe. (2 Thess. i. 10, &c.) We shall see face to face, and shall see him as he is. (1 John iii. 2.) We shall behold the glory that God hath given him. (John xvii. 24.) The righteous shall have dominion in that morning, and shall shine as stars, (Dan. xii. 3,) yea, as the sun in the firmament of the Father. (Matt. xiii. 34.) God will put his name upon them, and they shall be pillars in his temple, and go out no more. (Rev. ii. and iii.) Yea, they shall be equal with the angels. (Luke xx. 36.) Thus shall it be done to them whom God delighteth to honour, even to all in their several degrees who faithfully serve and follow Christ.

And yet, Christians, are we afraid of dying? I even hate my own heart for the remnant of its unbelief, which no more rejoiceth, and no more longeth to be with Christ, while I read and speak of all this to you. I know that clear and full apprehensions are proper to possessors, and therefore not to be here expected, but, Lord, give us such a light of faith as may let in some such tastes of glory, as are needful to us in our hoping state! How can we cheerfully labour, and suffer, and overcome without them? How shall we go through a tempting and troubling world? And entertain with joy the sentence of death, and lay down the body in the dust without the joy of the Lord, which is our strength? Had our hearts this one promise deeply written in them, we should live in holiness and die in joy.

I have spoken of my text to myself and you. I have now a copy of it to describe. Let none think that the praise of the dead is a needless or inconvenient work, Christ himself praiseth them, and will praise them whom he justifieth before all the world. "Well done, good and faithful servant, &c." (Matt. xxv.) "He will be admired and glorified in them." (2 Thess. i. 2.) The 11th of the Hebrews is the praise of many of them, of whom the world was not worthy; (this wicked world which know neither how to value them, or to use them). Christ

will have the tears and costly love of a poor penitent woman who anointed him, to be spoken of wherever the gospel is read. The orations of excellent Gregory Nazianzen, (greater than Gregory the Great,) with many such, show us that the ancients thought this a needful work. Many live in times and places where few such men are known, and they have need to know from others that there are, and have been such. Had not I known such, I had wanted one of the greatest arguments for my faith. I should the hardlier have believed that Christ is a Saviour, if I had not known such as he hath begun to save, nor that there is a heaven for souls, if I had not known some disposed and prepared for it, by a holy mind and life. I thank God, I have known many, many, many such, of several ranks, some high, more low. Oh! how many such (though not all of the same degree of holiness) have I lived with, who are gone before me; holy gentlemen, holy ministers of Christ, and holy poor men! I love heaven much the better when I think that they are there. And while I am so near them, and daily wait for my remove, though I here yet breathe and speak in flesh, why may I not think that I am nearlier related to that congregation than to this. The saying is, 'a friend is half our soul.' If so, sure the greater half of mine is gone thither long ago. It is but a little of me that is yet in painful, weary flesh. And now one part of me more is gone, the holy and excellent Henry Ashhurst, and God will have me live so long after him, as to tell you what he was, to his Father's and Redeemer's praise, and to provoke you to imitation.

God saith, "The memory of the just shall be blessed, while the wicked's name shall rot." Methinks even the natural pride of princes, who would not be the scorn of future ages, but the praise, should accidentally incline them to do good, and seem good at the least; while the common experience of all the world tells us, that God doth wonderfully show himself the Governor of the world, by ruling fame, to the perpetual honour of good, and the shame and scorn of evil.

Even among heathens, what a name is left of Titus, Trajan, Adrian, and above all the Roman emperors, of Antonine the philosopher, and Alexander Severus. And who nameth a Nero, Domitian, Commodus, Heliogabalus, &c., without reproach? Yea, I have observed that though malefactors hate that prince that punisheth them, and ungodly men hate piety and the persons that condemn and trouble them in their sins, yet such a

testimony for goodness is left in common nature, that even the generality of the profane and vicious world speak well of a wise, just, godly prince, even living, and much more when he is dead. And so they do of other public persons, magistrates and ministers of the gospel; and they will praise goodness in others that will not practise it, especially that which brings sensible good to men's bodies or to the commonwealth.

And therefore great men should hate that counsel which crieth down popularity, as a trick to make them contemn the sense of those below them. For usually it is the best rulers that are most praised by the vulgar, by reason of the self-glorifying light by which true goodness shineth in the world, and by reason of the experience of mankind, that good men will do good to others. How commonly will even drunkards, whoremongers, and unjust men, reproach a magistrate or teacher that is a drunkard, whoremonger, or unjust, and praise the contrary? Much more will the wise and good do it, who indeed are as the soul of kingdoms and other societies, and the chief in propagating fame. It is true that the *bellua multorum capitum* is liable to disorders, and unfit for secrets or uniting government, and it is hypocrisy to affect popular applause as our felicity or reward, or to be moved by it against God and duty. But many men see more and hear more than one, and single men are apter to be perverted and judge falsely by personal interest and prejudice, than the multitude are. *Vox populi* is oftentimes *vox Dei*. I have read Dr. Heylin, vilifying a Bishop Abbot, and saying, the church had no greater a plague than a popular prelate (or to that sense). And I have heard some reproach the late Judge Hale as a popular man; but as my intimacy with the last assured me that he set very little by the opinion of high or low, in comparison of justice and conscience, so, while God keeps up a testimony for goodness in human nature, men will not think ill of a man because his goodness hath constrained even the most to praise him. Nor will it prove the way to please God or profit themselves or others, to make themselves odious by cruelty or wickedness, and then to despise their judgments that dispraise them, and to cry down popularity. "Wo to you when men speak well of you," meaneth when either you do the evil that the wicked praise, or forsake truth and duty lest they dispraise you; or, as hypocrites, make men's praise your end.

It is not so low a matter as great birth or riches, or any other worldly honour, which I am to remember of our deceased friend.

Multitudes that are now in misery, did once excel him in all these. But yet, as a touch of the history of his life is fit to go before his exemplary character (which is my work), and because it is a great honour and blessing to the seed of the faithful, I shall premise a little first of his parentage, and then of that part of his life which I knew not, but give you on the unquestionable credit of others.

He was the third son of Henry Ashhurst, of Ashhurst, in Lancashire, Esq., by Cassandra, his wife, daughter of John Bradshaw, of Bradshaw, of the same county, Esq. His father was a gentleman of great wisdom and piety, and zealous for the true reformed religion in a country where papists much abounded. And when king James (the more to win them) was prevailed with to sign the book for dancing and other such sports on the Lord's-day, he being then a justice of peace, (as his ancestors had been,) and the papists, thus emboldened, sent a piper not far from the chapel to draw the people from the public worship, he sent him to the house of correction; and being for this misrepresented to the king and council, he was put to justify the legality of what he did, at the assizes; which he so well performed, that the judge was forced to acquit him; (though he was much contrary to him;) and an occasion being offered to put the oath of allegiance on his prosecutors, their refusal showed them papists, as was before suspected.

God blessed this gentleman in his three sons. The eldest was a man eminent for his wisdom, integrity, and courage, a member of the long parliament called 1640; though all such by interested, partial men are accounted and called what their prejudice and enmity doth suggest, and though, with many more such, he was by the conquering army abused and cast out. The second son was a colonel; and Henry, the youngest, about fifteen years old, was sent to London, and bound apprentice to a master somewhat severe. And whereas such severity tempteth many proud and graceless young men to be impatient and weary of their masters, and to break out to seek forbidden pleasures, at play-houses, taverns, and perhaps with harlots, and to rob their masters to maintain these lusts, till they are hardened in sin, and break their own hopes, and their parents' hearts, (alas! how many such wretches hath this city!) God's grace in our friend did teach him to make a clean contrary use of it. This affection did help to drive him to hear good preachers for his comfort, and to betake himself to God in prayer, and to search

the Scripture for direction, in which way he found the teaching and blessing of his heavenly Master, which helped him to bear all harshness and hardness in his place.

And having no place of retirement but a cold hole in the cellar, in the coldest nights, he spent much time in prayer and meditation; and his good father allowing him a yearly pension for his expenses, he spent it mostly in furnishing his poor closet with good books—not play-books or romances and idle tales, but such as taught him how to please God and to live for ever.

From his childhood he had a humble meekness, and sweetness of temper, which made his life easy to himself and others, and made him so acceptable to godly ministers and people, that their acquaintance and converse and love became to him a great confirmation and help to his growth in grace, especially good Mr. Simeon Ash, a man of his plainness, and of the primitive strain of Christianity.

His master, I need not tell how, so wasted his estate, that he shut up shop when Mr. Ashhurst was gone from him, whose great fidelity had helped to keep him up, and he took care of his indigent children afterwards.

His portion was but five hundred pounds and a small annuity, and one Mr. Hyet, a minister, lent him three hundred pounds more; with which stock he set up in partnership with one Mr. Row, a draper, and so continued three years. Mr. Row took up his stock, and was a major in the Earl of Essex's army, and left Mr. Ashhurst to the whole trade. Narrowly escaping the misery of an unsuitable match, he married, on Mr. Ash's motion, the daughter of one Mr. Risby, who is now his sorrowful widow, having with her about fifteen hundred pounds. He began his trade at the beginning of the wars, when others left off theirs. He dedicated yearly a good part of his gain to God, in works of charity; and it increased greatly: and as his trustiness made men desirous to deal with him, so God strangely kept those men that he trusted from breaking, when the most noted tradesmen in the same towns broke, to the undoing of those that trusted them. And though his trading was great about thirty years, he managed it with ease and calmness of mind, and was not by it diverted from duties of religion. He usually was at one word in his trading.

His body being healthful, he rose about four o'clock, or five, and in secret usually spent about two hours in reading, medita-

tion, and prayer, and then went to his family duties, as is afterward described. He was a great improver of his time, or else he could never have done what he did for so many persons, usually saying, he desired to live no longer than he might be serviceable to God and men. But he was most regardful to lose no part of the Lord's-day, in which he did all towards God and his family with great reverence and humble seriousness; and as he much desired godly, trusty servants, he had much of his desire, and his house was a school of piety, meekness, and as a church.

When his faithful pastor, Mr. Simeon Ash, was buried (the very day before the new Act of Uniformity would have silenced him, being an old non-conformist), he used to go, at the end of the week, to Hackney, to his country-house, and there spend the Lord's-day.

In the common fire his house was burnt, as well as others, but is rebuilt with advantage; and all God's corrections, and the hurt which, by his permission, we undergo from bad men, will turn to our gain, if we believe and patiently expect the end.

Thus far I have given you, for the most part, but what his best knowing friends have most credibly given me of the history of his pilgrimage; but I will next tell you what I knew myself, in above twenty years' familiarity with him, and that shall be more descriptive than historical, though, in what is already said from others, you may much know what he was.

Mr. Ash's praise, and his own free love, first brought on our acquaintance; and, indeed, my many restraining hinderances have kept me from so much familiarity with many.

Those that knew him need little of my description. Those that have been much in his house, and seen his children and servants carry themselves as reverently and respectfully to him, as if he had been a lord, when yet he was so lovingly familiar with them, will think there was some cause for this. Those that hear it the common speech of magistrates, godly ministers, and people, 'We have lost the most excellent pattern of piety, charity, and all virtue that this city hath bred in our times,' will think that there is some reason for this praise. Some of us seem to shine to strangers, who are cloudy and contemptible to those that are near us: and many excellent, obscure, poor Christians are taken little notice of, in a low, retired, or unobserved station: but his esteem, and honour, and love, was at home and abroad, by his children, servants, neighbours, fellow-citizens, that I say

not even by some that loved not his religiousness, or that took him to be too much a friend to those whom their opinions and interest engaged them against.

And if you would truly know what was the meritorious cause of all this love and honour, I will tell you: it was the image of Christ, and the fruits of his holy doctrine and his Spirit. No man believeth that there is a God, who doth not believe that the liker is any man to God, the better and the more honourable he is. All is glorious that is holy, that is of God, and for God, separated to him from all that is common and unclean. Base fools may more admire and reverence a proud man, or gilded idol; but all that know God, and the almost nothingness of vain man, do value all things and persons in the measure, as they are dispositively, actively, and relatively divine. The Spirit of God, by David, begins the Psalms with describing such blessed men as these: and Christ, next after his preaching repentance, begins with such men's characters and blessedness, Matt. v. I shall, therefore, now truly tell you what our deceased brother was, and what of God so shined in him as commanded all this love and praise; while far greater men, by their filth and folly, their sin and hurtful cruelty, have made themselves the plague and burden of their times, as the children of him whose name is but the contract of 'do evil.'

I. His religion was only the Bible, as the rule. He was a mere Scripture Christian, of the primitive spirit and strain. No learning signified much with him, but what helped him to understand the Scripture. The Bible was his constant book, and in it he had great delight; and he loved no preaching so well as that which made much and pertinent use of Scripture, by clear exposition and suitable application. He liked not that which worthy Dr. Manton was wont to call 'gentlemanly preaching,' set out with fine things, and laced, and gilded, plainly speaking self-preaching, man-pleasing, and pride; for when pride chooseth the text, the method, and the style, the devil chooseth it, though the matter be of God: therefore he also highly valued those books which are much in such wise and seasonable use of Scripture; of which he commended, above all, the lectures of Mr. Arthur Hildersham.

II. He neither much studied books of controversy, nor delighted in discourse of any of our late differences. I scarce ever heard him engage in any of them; but his constant talk was of practical matter, of God, of Christ, of heaven, of the

heart and life, of grace and duty, or of the sense of some practical text of Scripture. He so little savoured and minded the quarrels that many lay out their greatest zeal on, and find matter in them to condemn and backbite one another, that he either carried it as a stranger or an adversary to such discourse.

III. Accordingly, while men were guilty of no damning heresy or sin, but held all great and necessary truths in love and holiness, and righteousness of life, he made little difference in his respects and love. A serious, godly, independent, presbyterian, or episcopal Christian, was truly loved and honoured by him. Indeed, he loved not church tyranny, nor hypocritical images of religion, on one hand, nor confusion on the other; but the primitive spirit of seriousness, purity, and charity, he valued in all. A differing tolerable opinion never clouded the glory of sincere Christianity in his eyes. He was of no sect, and he was against sects as such, being of a truly catholic spirit: but he could see true godliness and honesty in many whose weakness made them culpable, in too much adhering to a side or sect.

IV. He greatly hated backbiting and obloquy. "Speak evil of no man," was a text which he often had in his mouth. I never knew any noted men so free from that vice as Judge Hale and Mr. Ashhurst. If a man had begun to speak ill of any man behind his back, either they would say nothing, or divert him to something else, or show their distaste of it. Sin he would speak against, but very little of the person. Only one sort of men he would take the liberty to express his great dislike of, and that was the hinderers of the gospel, and silencers of faithful preachers of it, and persecutors of godly Christians, and oppressors of the poor: and their pretences of government, and order, and talk against schism, could never reconcile him to that sort of men: but his distaste was never signified by scurrility, nor any thing that savoured of an unruly or seditious spirit.

V. His heart was set on the hallowing of God's name, the coming of his kingdom, and the doing of his will on earth as it is done in heaven; on the propagating of religion, and encouraging of all able, faithful preachers and practisers of it to his power. Ever since I knew him, it seemed much more of his serious business in the world than his trade or worldly gain was. He was a right hand to his faithful pastor, good old Mr. Simeon Ash. How seldom did I visit Mr. Ash, at any time, but I found

or left them together; and now they are together with Christ. He did not love with barren words, nor serve God of that which cost him nothing. Few but I knew from his own mouth, that he gave these eighteen years (since August 24, 1662,) an hundred pounds a year to the ejected ministers of Lancashire, and some schools there and in the neighbouring parts, and many Bibles, catechisms, and other good books, to divers places, besides the said one hundred pounds a year: and a friend of his and mine tells me that it was to him that he yearly delivered it to be distributed, save that lately twenty pounds a year of it went to Northumberland.

VI. Indeed, charity was his life and business. Another mean man that was oft with him, saith that he hath had of him many score pounds to give away, which few ever knew of. I do not think that there are many that can say that ever they were denied when they asked him for money to a charitable use. I am sure I never was.

About 1662 and 1663, he endeavoured hard to have got the pious citizens of London to contribute yearly to the relief of the poor ejected ministers of the several counties where they had been born; and I was employed to the Lord Chancellor Hide to acquaint him with it and get his consent, that it might not be taken for a fomenting of faction: but though he said, 'God forbid that he should be against men's charity,' yet most durst not trust him, and so it fell.

Since then he and others set up a conventicle, which, methinks, might be tolerated by bishops themselves. They met often to consult and contribute for the relief of poor housekeepers; and they chose an ancient, active godly man, fit for that work, to be as a deacon; I mean, to go about the city, and find out such housekeepers as were very poor, sick, or impotent, or any way in want, and to bring in a catalogue of their names, places, and degrees of need; always preferring the pious, honest poor. And they made Mr. Thomas Gouge their treasurer, (one of the same trade, whose hands could not be tied from doing good when his tongue was tied by the silencers,) and the foresaid messenger brought them their contributions, with good instructions, and prayer when there was need; for which use, sometimes, they procured a minister for the ignorant,

Indeed, he was the common comforter and reliever of distressed ministers and others. I know of none in London that they so commonly resorted to as him.

VII. And so large was his desire of doing good, that not only England, Scotland, and Ireland knew it, but it specially extended to the natives in America; of whose conversion to Christianity he had a fervent desire. In Oliver Cromwell's time, a public collection was made all over England for the educating of scholars, and defraying other charges in New England for that work, of which good old Mr. Eliots, the Indian's evangelist, was the chief operator: with that money, lands were purchased to the value of about eight hundred pounds a year, and settled on a corporation of citizens in trust, and Mr. Ashhurst must be the treasurer, on whom lay the main care and work. When the king was restored, the corporation was dead in law; and one that sold most of the lands which were settled for that use (Colonel Bedingfield, a Papist) seized on his sold land, and yet refused to repay the money. The care of the recovery, and of restoring the corporation, and all the work, was the business of Mr. Ashhurst; for which he desired my solicitation of the Lord Chancellor Hide, who did readily own the justness of the cause and goodness of the work, and first gave us leave to nominate the new corporation, and Mr. Boyle for president, and Mr. Ashhurst for treasurer; and afterwards, when it came to suit before him, did justly determine it for the corporation.

And so these nineteen years last past, it was he, by the help of Mr. Boyle, and the rest, who hath had the main care of the New England assistance, by which a printing-press hath been there set up, and the Bible translated into the Indian's tongue, and other books also, for their instruction, and the agents encouraged to help them, till the late unhappy war there interrupted much of their endeavours; and of their victory in that war the converted Indians were not the least cause.

Oh! how sad will the news of his death be to old Mr. Eliots, if he live to hear it, and to his American converts: and he hath left by his will an hundred pounds to the college there, and fifty pounds to their corporation.

IX. Some may think that he wanted a public spirit, because he avoided being a magistrate, and paid his fine rather than take an alderman's place: but it was only to keep the peace of his conscience, which could not digest, 1. The corporation declaration and oath; nor, 2. The execution of the laws against non-conforming ministers and people. I never heard him plead that the solemn oath, called the National Covenant, was not unlawfully imposed or taken. His thoughts of that I knew not;

but he was not ignorant that the words showed ill effect ; but promise or vow to God, and that a vow made notwithstanding, to the lawful and necessary part of his children and he thought that to oppose, in our places, lions of love, popery, and schism, and to repent of sin and amendment. He ful and necessary things ; and therefore to say that ‘ the men used obligation, by that oath, on me or any other person, ’ without, incepting any of these aforesaid, was a thing that he would rather I believe, have suffered death than do. He would not do that which he thought perjury himself, much less justify it in thousands whom he never knew : and he feared lest he should become guilty of constituting all the cities and corporations of England by perjury, and stigmatizing the front of the nation with such a fearful brand. Some men think that the mark of the beast in Revelations, without which none might buy or sell, was ‘ perjury ’ and ‘ persecution ; ’ finding that the Lateran council, *sub Inoc. III.*, and others, which are of their religion, do absolve subjects of their temporal lords, whom the Pope excommunicateth from their oaths of allegiance, which was ordinarily practised against emperors and kings ; and finding that these lords or princes themselves were to swear to exterminate all called heretics, on pain of excommunication, deposition, and damnation ; and that every such ruler that professeth himself a papist knowingly, bindeth himself to destroy all protestants, or exterminate them, if he can do it without injury to the papal church : and also finding that all their clergy must swear the Trent oath, by which they cannot but be perjured ; and they say that they never heard or read that ever such a thing was done by heathens, infidels, or Mahomedans ; and Mr. Ashhurst was afraid of any thing that seemed to him such a brand. Yet I never heard him speak uncharitably of those worthy men who do what he refused, supposing that they in words or writing declared as openly as they swore and took the declaration, that they took it but in such or such a lawful sense ; though he could not do so himself.

IX. He had an earnest desire of the welfare of the city, that it might flourish in piety, sobriety, justice, and charity, and that good men might be in power ; believing that the welfare of the world lieth not so much in the forms of government, as in the goodness of men ; and that that is the best form which best secureth us from bad men. And all such service as he could do, no man was readier to do, as when he was master of the

VII. And so, ors' Company, and on many other occasions, he England, Sco. relations tell me, that he then gave them about tended to thown money, and greatly promoted the improvement Christianity k, to the rebuilding of their hall, and abatement of a public co'.

of schole never was a soldier, even when London was a garrison, that always for the ways and works of peace. He was ever ge' against tumults, sedition, and rebellion; and I never heard a word from him injurious to the king and higher powers. He was greatly troubled at the late resistance made by the assemblies in Scotland, and glad when his letters thence told him, that they were but a few hot-headed men, whom the generality of the godly presbyterians disclaimed, and would oppose. Peace was his temper, and peace with all men, to his power, he kept and promoted; and I never knew man that lived in more peace with his conscience, and with all men, good and bad. I never heard that he was an enemy, or had an enemy, save sin, the devil, the world, and the flesh, as all good men renounce them. Nay, I never heard of any one man that ever spake evil of him, so strange a reconciling power hath such a mind, and such a life.

XI. He excelled all that ever I knew in the grace of meekness; and Christ saith, "That such shall inherit even the earth." For men know not how to fall out with such, while no public employment doth, by cross interest, cause it. They that were nearer him than I, say, that they never saw him in any undecent passion; he knew not how to show himself angry, nor nor displeased, otherwise than by mild and gentle words. His countenance was still serene, and his voice still calm and quiet; never fierce or loud, no, not to a servant. He oft used to women the words of saint Peter, "A meek and a quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price;" (1 Peter iii. 5;) which is the ornament there commended, instead of gold and gaudiness, which now are grown into so common and excessive use, as if it were the design to avoid the imputation of hypocrisy, by wearing the open badges of folly and pride, lest they should seem wise and humble; as some will rant and scorn, lest they should be thought religious hypocrites.

God fitted him for his place; had he been a magistrate or a preacher, a little more sharpness had been needful. And though I once knew one, that for want of just anger, was too like Eli, and could not sufficiently reprove or correct a child,

yet it pleased God, that his mildness had no such ill effect ; but his family loved and revered him the more.

XII. I never observed a father carry himself to his children (as well as to his wife) with more constant expressions of love, and with a greater desire of their holiness and salvation. He spake to his children with that endeared kindness, as men used to do to a bosom friend, in whom is their delight. And, indeed, love is the vital spirit, which must make all education and counsel effectual, which, without it, usually is dead, both to children, and all others; though there are seasons when we must be angry and not sin.

XIII. Indeed, he was so made of love and gentleness, that I may say, that love was his new nature, and his temper, his religion, and his life, and that he dwelt in love; and, therefore, in God, and God in him. His looks, his smiles, his speech, his deeds, were all the constant significations of love.

XIV. And no less eminent was his humility; his speech, company, garb, behaviour, and all his carriage, did declare it. He was a great disliker of proud, vain attire, boasting speech, and pomp, and inordinate, worldly splendour, especially that which was chargeable, while so many thousands were in want. He was poor in spirit, suited to a low condition, though he was rich, and condescended to men of low estate. The poor were his pleasing friends. He loved the rich, that were rich to God, but he hated ambition, and flattering great men.

XV. Indeed, he was a plain Christian, of the primitive stamp, strange to hypocrisy and affectation, and all that is called the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and pride of life; and the sins of Sodom, pride, idleness, and fulness; his habit, his furniture, his provisions were all plain; nothing for excess, as provision for the flesh, to satisfy the lust thereof; yet all that was needful for right ends. No niggardly parsimony, but sparing to do good; sparing from all the ways of pride and pomp; but never sparing from decency, or good works.

XVI. The government of his family, and the worship of God there performed, was wise, cheerful, grave, and constant. He worshipped God as other good Christians use to do; besides his secret devotions, reading the Scriptures, (after the craving of God's help,) and giving some plain, short notes, which were suited to his family's use, catechizing, and taking an account of

their profiting; singing psalms, and prayer; and, on the Lord's-day, hearing, and repeating the sermons. A non-conformist preaching an early sermon to many in his house, which so ended, that none might be hindered from the further work of the day. The whole day seemed not too long to him for the delightful employment of his soul toward God. Oh! how far was he from being weary, or needing any vain recreation. In his family-worship he played not the orator, nor was very tedious; but in conference of good things, and in his counsels plain and short; much like the style of Mr. Greenham's writings.

XVII. He had a special care to place his children in a way of employment, and with good relations; out of the way both of idleness and ill company, and worldly vanity and temptations. And God hath so blessed him in his wise and holy endeavours for them, that of four sons and two daughters, there is not one whom we have not good cause to hope well of, that they will, in piety and welfare, answer his endeavours.

XVIII. Others can tell you more than I of his management of his trade; only this I will say, that God greatly blessed his honesty and liberality; and men knew that they might trade with him, without any danger of deceit, so that he grew up to a very considerable estate; and yet was never so intent on his trade, but he was ready for any service of God, and help to others, or public work.

And those that say, they shall lose their custom, except they tittle and make their bargains in ale-houses, coffee-houses, or taverns, or use much prating and enticing words, may see here that one hath thriven more than most have done, that yet took a quite contrary course.

XIX. He was a stranger to vain talk and frothy jests, and also to a sour, morose converse; but good, short, cheerful discourse, was his ordinary attainment.

XX. It is no wonder, if in such a life, so absolutely devoted to God, he lived in a constant serenity of mind; he that had peace with God and men, had peace of conscience. I never heard him speak one word which savoured of any doubt of his salvation, or discouraging thoughts of the life to come; he lived not in bondage to tormenting fears, or sad apprehensions; but studied fully to please God, and joyfully trusted him, rejoiced in his love, and hoped for his kingdom; but without any over-

valuing of his own worth, or works; having much in his mouth those words of St. Paul, "I have nothing to glory of," and "I am nothing."

XXI. The last part of his example, which I have to commend to you, and specially to myself, is his marvellous patience, as through all his life, so specially in his last and sharp affliction. It was a providence which posed many of us, that God should so smartly handle such a man as this; till God's oracles told our faith enough to silence all murmuring thoughts of God. For God had given him before the blessings of Job, a healthful body, and constant prosperity; and shall sinners taste no correction, and receive nothing of God, but pleasant things? All God's graces must have their exercise and trial; and faith and patience are most tried and exercised in a suffering state: God loveth not martyrs less than others. 2. And he had served God before by action, and usually, our last service is by patience; and Lazarus, in sores and wants, was in a safer way to Abraham's bosom, than Dives in his silks and sumptuous fare. 3. And we are naturally so loth to leave this world and flesh, that God seeth it meet to help our willingness, by making us weary of it; and affliction, though grievous to the present, tendeth to the quiet fruit of righteousness, and making us partakers of God's holiness, certainly tendeth to make us partakers of his glory; cross-bearing, and partaking of the sufferings of Christ, is an indispensable christian duty; we must be conformed to him in his sufferings, if we will reign with him, and be partakers of our Master's joy. And in heaven all tears are wiped away, and there are no groans nor moans, no sorrows nor repining, or accusing God, for any of our former sufferings. What need have I, yea; what need have you all to remember this?

Flesh will feel, and faith will not avoid pain and present torment, no more than death; but it fortified our dear brother's soul, that it should not too much suffer with his body.

Several years he was molested most with some cloudy troubles of his head, which Tunbridge waters eased for a time; and next with acrimony of urine; and next, it too painfully appeared, to be the stone in the bladder. He long resolved to endure it to the death; but at last extremity of torment and despair of any other ease, did suddenly cause him to choose to be cut. Two stones were found, and one of them in the operation was broken into pieces; many of which were taken out, by very

terrible search, and about thirty pieces after came away through the wound ; physicians and all present admired at his patience. No word, no action, signified any distressing sense ; and, though he was about sixty-five years old, God did recover him, and heal the wound ; but we were too unthankful, and his pains returned : gently at first, but afterwards as terribly as before. And, after that, a strong fever, of which, unexpectedly, he recovered. And, then, oft inflammations, and at last, a dangerous one ; and finally, so great torment, that a French lithotomist being here, he was over-persuaded to be searched, and cut again, and a third stone was taken away, with competent speed and ease, and divers big fragments of it, which had been broken off in the first operation. Thus was he cut twice in about a year's space ; and the wound seemed marvellously to heal for divers months ; and when we had prayed hard for him, we turned it to thanksgiving, and thought the danger of death was past ; but after, his strength failed, and he died in peace. God gave him those months of ease and calmness, the better to bear his approaching change.

In all this, none heard him express any querulous impatience. Most of his words were telling men how tolerable his pain was, and how good God was, and thankfully acknowledging his mercy. The last words which I had from him, were of the goodness of God, 'O that we could love God more.' And when he thought he should recover, he was very solicitous in his inquiry, what God would have him do in gratitude. And one of the chief things which he resolved on to one of his old friends, was, that he would set upon as many parliament men as he could speak with, to repeal all the laws which hinder good men from preaching Christ's gospel. Adding moreover, 'And countrymen,' saith he, 'you and I will take care for Lancashire, that the gospel may be more preached among them.' (It being their native country, and abounding with papists, and many parts having scarcity of preachers.)

But suddenly he passed from the exercise of faith and patience, unto sight and rest.

His last words (save his farewell, and "Come, Lord Jesus,") were to an old friend, Mr. Nathaniel Hulton, 'to walk in the way of God, will be comfort at death ;' being not of their mind, who for fear of fetching too much comfort from our own duty (which they call works) do think Christ's merits injured by such thoughts and words as these : as if the cure were a

disgrace to our physician, or Christ (Matt. xxv.) had mis-described the last judgment; or God were no "rewarder of them that diligently seek him," and "laying up our treasure and hearts in heaven," were no means to be "received into the everlasting habitation."

And thus passed this faithful soul to Christ.

And now, reader, have I not shown thee a true copy of the first part of my text? One that indeed served Christ and followed him. Is not this his image and imitation? And is it not sure then that he is where Christ is? and that God that maketh it our duty to honour his memory on earth, hath given him another kind of honour in the heavens?

And to what other end have I said all this of him?

In general, "Go and do thou likewise."

I. I do it much for the use of the magistrates and people of this city? I commend this example to them all. Oh, what an honourable and happy city would this be, if you were all such as our deceased brother was? We joyfully thank God for so much goodness as flourished among you? The Lord make London still the glory of the cities on earth! But were all families used as his family was, and all men here lived as this man lived, we should suspect we had the "new earth, wherein dwelt righteousness." And were princes and nobles such, the world such, or but the christian church such, what a taste of heaven should we have on earth. But should we not then be too loth to die? and too little difference earth from heaven? But, oh, that London, who know that I do not over-praise this holy man, would but imitate his example!

II. I do it much for his children's use. Their honour, their comfort, but especially their everlasting good. Will they ever forget the instructions, the love, and the life of such a father?

III. I do it partly for the use of the clergy and their agents, that have judged such men as this to be worthy of all the reproach and sufferings which some canons and late laws have laid on such: I write not to cast reproach back upon them. But, reverend fathers and brethren, as you believe a God, a Christ, a judgment and a life to come, bethink you whether such men as this should be fined, or excommunicated, *ipse facto*, as your canon doth it? And when Christ hath promised, that if they serve him, they shall be where he is, and his Father will honour them, dare you make your church-doors too narrow to receive them, when Dr. Heylin tells us how far Bishop Laud

would have had it widened to receive the papists, if they would come in : do not such men as this serve and follow Christ ? And are they yet excommunicate schismatics if they will not serve and follow you, in the things that neither Christ nor his apostles commanded or practised ? yea, which they forbid (as I have proved in my First Plea and my Treatise of Episcopacy). I am in great hope that if you knew but the tenth part of the now silenced ministers, and prosecuted people, that I do, your consciences would constrain you to publish your repentance, and petition king and parliament for better terms of unity and peace. For I will hope that most silencers and afflictors do it more through ignorance and unacquaintedness with the men than in diabolical malignity.

IV. And I have done this for my own use. To discharge my duty ; to set before me this pattern of sincerity, love, and patience, for my reproof and imitation. We were of the same year for age ; and of the same judgment, and desire, and aim ; but I have not attained to his degree of goodness and patience. Being not unlikely to be exercised with some like afflictions, after a life of wonderful mercy, and quickly to follow my departed friend ; I beg of God that he will not try me beyond the strength which he will give me, but so increase my faith and patience, that I may finish my course with joy.

V. Lastly, I have written this for the comfort of all serious, suffering believers. Christians, let us not think that we serve Christ for nought, or that our labour for holiness and heaven is in vain ? Nor let us faint when we are tried and chastised. Labour and sorrow will quickly have an end : angels are ready to convoy us home : how low soever you are here in your bodies, estates, employment, or reputation, you have Christ's promise that his Father will honour you ! Look then to Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of your faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, lest you be weary and faint in your minds ; and comfort one another with these words, that " we shall be ever with the Lord." Amen.

A SERMON
PREACHED AT THE FUNERAL OF
MR. JOHN CORBET,
THAT
FAITHFUL MINISTER OF CHRIST
WITH
HIS TRUE AND EXEMPLARY CHARACTER.

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT THE
FUNERAL OF MR. JOHN CORBET,
§c. §c.

2 COR. xii. 1—9.

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

It is but lately that we were here lamenting the loss of this city and the church of God, in the removal of an excellent saint: we are now come on the like occasion. It is a year of jubilee for holy souls, and a harvest for heaven. The ripest are

gathered, and the green and sour fruit is yet left on earth. But, oh ! what a heavy judgment is it, to the needy world, which wants such lights, as God is taking in. But we are not the choosers. It is well if we be obedient learners, and can follow such to life in the holy path.

The text read to you, hath so much matter of instruction that will excuse me if I scarce name the most. It is part of Paul's vindication against the accusers of his person and ministry, which were some erroneous judaizing teachers. He confesseth that glorying is an inexpedient thing, and sounds like folly ; but yet, in case of necessary defence, it may be modestly and sincerely done. Especially the opening of those divine revelations and gifts which make for the strength of the faith of others. The explication shall be taken in as we go.

Observ. 1. It is no new thing for the wisest and holiest of Christ's ministers to be accused even by the teachers of Christianity.

For 1. There are many erroneous teachers, that are confident they are in the right, and oppose the teachers of truth as if they were the erring men.

2. And there are worldly, proud, malignant hypocrites, who bring their unsanctified hearts into the sacred office, and manage it as men do common trades, but with greater enmity and strife.

3. And there are abundance of ignorant or half-wise injudicious men, who have self-conceitedness enough to be peremptory and confident, but neither knowledge nor humility enough to perceive their own weakness and mistakes.

Use 1. Therefore let it not become a scandal to you, if you hear some teachers accusing and vilifying others.

2. And think not that a minister is erroneous or faulty, merely because others, though of great name, do accuse him, or so represent him. It hath still been so, and while Satan is Satan, and man is corrupt man, and there is so much darkness, and so much worldly temptations, and cross interests, it will be so ; and preachers will be made the common and dangerous hinderers of preachers ; and where they have power, will silence them, and disgrace their work.

Observ. 2. Glorying or boasting, is in itself an inexpedient thing. It savours of pride, and selfishness, and folly, when it is not necessary and just. And therefore all Christians should be backward to it.

Observ. 3. Yet that which is so inexpedient, may, on just occasions, become good, and a duty.

That is, 1. When it is made needful to God's honour and the vindication and success of our ministry and the truth.

And,

2. When these are our true needs. And,

3. When we speak nothing but the truth.

Use 3. Oh, that men knew how great a sin it is, by their confident errors and rash accusations, to put Christ's ministers upon such a defence; much more to seek their silence and destruction.

2. And here you see that inconveniences will not excuse us from necessary duties; nor prove that all is unlawful which hath such. What is it in this confused and imperfect world that hath not its inconveniences. In government, both monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, absolute and limited, have their many inconveniences. In churches, the power of people and pastors, equality and subordination, riches and poverty, severity and lenity, to use discipline or neglect it, have their inconveniences. In worship, imposed words or free, and all human forms and modes have their inconveniences. In houses, a married life and a single, to have children and to have none, to have servants or none, to have much business or little, to be high or low, rich and poor, to rule gently or severely, have all their inconveniences. In our conversations, to be yielding or not, to converse with few or many, with high or low, to speak or to be silent, have all their inconveniences.

And yet there are men that on one side can silence Christ's faithful ministers by hundreds or thousands, and persecute the true members of Christ, and cast out true discipline, and corrupt the churches, and justify all this by urging some inconveniences. And there are others that can unchurch most churches in the world, and separate from their worship, and think the charge of inconveniences will justify all. And so we should have no government, no ministry, no worship, no families, wives, or children, or servants, no books, no trades, no food, no physic, if all mere inconveniences forbid them.

By this our instance, Solomon may be understood, what it is to be wise and righteous overmuch, some are so wise and righteous (materially, not formally) that they can find faults in all persons, all duties, all speeches, all actions, and on pretence of doing all better, would hinder us from doing what we can, and

undo all as if it were for amending. Not but that inconveniences may make actions sinful ; but the great part of christian prudence lieth in holding the balance, and trying wisely whether the good or hurt, the benefit or inconvenience do weigh down ; we shall never preach or pray, nor converse with mankind without some inconveniency.

Observ. 4. Divine revelations acquainting the soul with heaven, are matters most worthy of lawful, humble, modest glorying.

It was Paul's heavenly visions which he gloried in as his advancement, when he had mentioned his many persecutions and sufferings in the way.

These tend to that perfection and felicity of souls : in these men have to do with the glorious Jehovah, the angelic choir, the heavenly society, our glorified Head, our highest hopes, and matter of the greatest everlasting joys. Oh, if God would but give you and me this heavenly sight, and let us but once see what Paul saw, what little things would crowns and lordships seem to us when we look down from such a height ! What trifling should we think most of the bustles of this world ! What toys and dreams, their wealthy honour and sinful delights ! I should then say, ' Now I see what it is that we seek and hope, and suffer for, what it is to enjoy God and our Redeemer : and therefore now I know what it is to be a believer, a saint, a man indeed.' Oh ! what a help to mortification would such a sight of paradise be ? How easily should we after resist temptations, deny the flesh, condemn the world, and hate our sins. Oh ! how it would overcome all these distrustful trembling fears of death, and make us long, and groan, and cry to be with Christ. What life would it put into all holy duty. How easily should we bear our short afflictions. How would it mellow our sour, contentious minds toward one another, and teach us better whom to love and live in peace with, than pride and worldliness or faction will teach us.

Fellow Christians, though you and I may not expect such raptures and ecstasies as Paul's ; yet we have the gospel of Jesus, a divine revelation of this same heavenly glory ; not to be set light by, because we see it not ourselves. It is by the Son of God that saw it, and now is there preparing it for us ; it is sealed by a certain word, and the heavenly beams are sent down from him upon our hearts, to show it us, and lead us up. We are capable of a lively belief, of the full assurance of hope, of

the pledges, earnest, and first-fruits ; and of rejoicing with unspeakable, glorying joy. We are capable in our manner, and are sure of traffic for heaven, and with heaven, of sending up our treasures, and there conversing in spirit, as in the city which is our home, and hearing by faith the joyful harmony of the heavenly songs and praises of Jehovah. Here we are capable of such a powerful touch with the loadstone of divine love, or to have our spirits so refined and sublimated, as shall make it as natural to them to make upward towards Christ, and long for full and perfect union. Oh! had we lived as believers should have lived, how much more of heavenly-mindedness, and delight might we have attained than we have done. Oh! thank God for the gospel revelation, and beg grace to bring it in power on your hearts. And then, let worldlings take their earthly portions ; we can spare them all that hindereth not the gathering and edification of the church, and the heavenly interest of souls.

• **Observ. 5.** There is a third heaven and heavenly paradise, where are the concerns and hopes of holy souls.

Paul was taken thither up ; had he no interest there, no hopes, no friends, no business there ; why, then, should he have been rapt up thither ? How many heavens there be, and why it is here called the third ; I will not interrupt your more necessary thoughts, by conjecturing inquiries. Most say, the air is called the first ; the starry heaven the second ; and the place of the glorified spirits the third ; but these are vain conjectures. No man knoweth how many there be ; the globes or stars, are at vast distance from each other ; some great philosophers have been tempted to think, that world is infinite, as an adequate effect of infinite power, because God hath no unactive power ; all this is profane rashness. The heavens, which are our inheritance, are the place where perfect glorious spirits shall live in blessed society with Christ and one another ; joyfully beholding the glory of God, and feeling the delights of mutual love ; and yet there are different degrees of glory from the different degrees of the capacity of spirits ; whether also from any difference in the place, and communicating causes, we shall shortly better know : there are more sorts of spirits than we can now know. Though I know not how to receive Aquinas's doctrine, that no two angels are of the same species ; the diversity, as well as the incomprehensible glory and numbers, are unknown to us. Those that God employeth under Christ as his pursuivants,

messengers, and servants for his church, are called angels. Whether there be orders over orders, quite above angels, and how angels differ from the perfected spirits of the just, we know not.

As it is designed for saints, its glory consisteth,

1. In the glory of the place.
2. In the perfecting and glorifying the natures and persons that enjoy it.
3. In the glory of the heavenly society, Christ, angels, and saints.
4. In the glory of their high and excellent work, to love and magnify God for ever.

5. In the communication of the joyful love, and light, and life of God, upon these glorified spirits. Oh! what doth every one of these words signify! Is not this a paradise indeed, that is a place of purest, greatest pleasure?

Use 1. And are we not taught by such a glass as this, how great and how good a God we serve? Oh, look up to the heavens and see what he is by that which he hath made. Yea, it is said, (Psalm cxiii. 6,) that he humbles himself to behold the things in heaven, as well as upon earth. O sinners! what a God do you despise, neglect, and forget! and what a heaven do you sell for fleshly lust, and to feed a corruptible body for the grave! O Christians! what a God have we to serve and fear, and how zealously and purely should we serve him! What a God have we to trust and hope in, and how great a sin is it to distrust him! What a heaven have we to seek and hope for, and how cheerfully and constantly should we do it! Alas! our cold hearts, and slothful lives, and worldly cares, and sinking spirits, bescem not such a God and heaven. Were we designed but to inhabit the sun, or some resplendent star, how high is it above this earth? Shall we creep only on earth and feed on dust, and defile our souls as if we were preparing them by sin for hell, when we have a third heaven and paradise to look up to, and seek and hope for?

Doth Satan say, 'What is that to thee, that is so far above thee?' It is to us; it is the place where the glory of God is which we seek; where our glorified Head is. The place of holy spirits, whither also Enoch and Elias were translated; where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob live; whither Christ's Spirit went at death, and where he received the believing thief; where Lazarus is in Abraham's bosom, which Stephen foresaw, and to

which he was received. It is the place which we are set on earth to seek, dearly purchased, surely promised, to which God's Spirit is now preparing us, and of which it is our pledge and seal. Were it not for such an end and hope, how vain were man, and what a dream this world. Take heaven from us, and take our lives, our joys, yea, more than many such lives as these. Oh! that we could be more deeply sensible for what we are Christians, and for what we hope! what holy, patient, joyful Christians should we then be. But it is not a wavering belief, a divided heart, and a few cold, strange, and staggering thoughts of heaven that will do this as we desire it.

Observ. 6. Souls are not so closely tied to the body, but now they may be rapt up into paradise, or the third heavens.

When Paul could not tell whether it was in the body or out of it, it showeth somehow the soul was there, and that it is possible it might be out of the body.

Obj. If it were in the body, the body must go with it. If out of the body, it must leave the body dead.

Answ. It might be in the body, and not take up the body. If man were born blind, the lucid spirits, and a visive faculty would act only within, but as soon as a miracle opened his eyes, he would see as far as the sun and stars. And the sun sends down even its beams to this earth. Should God open this dark lantern of the body, we little know how far a soul may see without any separation from the body. Did not Stephen's soul in the body see Christ in glory?

And if it went out of the body, it followeth not that it must be separated from the body and leave it dead. When London was on fire, how high did the flame go above the fuel, and yet it was not separated from the fuel. A soul can stay in the body, and yet not be confined to it as a chicken in the shell, but may see, and mount above it to the heavens.

Use. Therefore think not of souls as you do of bodies, which are circumscribed in their proper places. We know not what formal thoughts to have of the dimensions or locality of spirits. Somewhat such *eminenter* they have, (for they have individuation and numeral quantity, and some passivity,) but not *formaliter* as gross bodies have. While the soul is in the body it worketh on it, and is a substance distinct from it, and such a form as hath also its own form, even its formal power or virtue, of vital activity, sensitive and intellective perception, and sensitive and rational appetite. It is active life itself, as the prin-

cept, it perceiveth itself, and loveth itself, it understandeth what other spirits are, by itself, it remembereth innumerable things past, it riseth up to some knowledge of God, it can seek, love, and obey him, and all this though not out of the body, yet above any efficiency of bodily organs. Oh! what a sad part of man's fall is it, to lose so much as the world hath done, of the knowledge of ourselves. And to begin to know ourselves, our souls, and how man differs from a beast, is the first part of recovering knowledge, leading up towards the knowledge of God, which is the highest.

O then, sirs, do not only own the heavenly dignity of souls, but use your souls accordingly. Are they good for no better than to serve the body in lust and appetite, and keep it in motion and some pleasure, or at least from stinking a while in the world? Sinners, hear and consider, if you wilfully condemn your own souls to bestiality, God will condemn them to perpetual misery. Yea, you do it yourselves, and pass from brutishness to the devilish nature and woful state.

Observ. 7. The things of the heavenly paradise are to mortal men unutterable.

That is,

I. Such as cannot be uttered. And,

II. Such as must not be uttered. It is not lawful to Paul that saw them.

Not that nothing of it may or must be uttered. Christ hath brought life and immortality to light. They are great things and glorious which are by him revealed. Enough well believed and used to overcome the temptation of this flesh and world, and to raise us to a holy life, and joyful hope, and comfortable sufferings and death. Christ best knoweth the just measure of revelation meet for earth. Candles must serve for narrow and dark rooms, and are more worth than all the gold on earth. The sun by day must not come too near us lest it burn us up, but send us its beams at the distance that we can bear them. And all souls are not here meet for the same measures, much less for that sight which the glorified enjoy. The pure in heart do see God, (Matt. v.,) and even here more than impure souls.

I. There is no human language that hath words fit to reveal that part of the heavenly things which God hath shut up from us as his secrets. Man's words are only fitted to man's use and to man's concerns, and not to angels and the secrets of heaven. We speak not a word of God himself, which signifieth formally

what God is, but only analogically or by similitude, and yet not in vain. Paul saw, and holy souls see, that which no human language can properly express.

2. And if it could, yet mortals could not understand it, no more than a language which they never heard.

3. And Paul had it revealed in a manner suited to his own use, and not in a manner meet for communication.

II. And it was unlawful also to utter it. 1. For God saw not all that meet for the dark world of undisposed sinners, which was allowed to one eminent saint.

2. Nor would he have so much more revealed by a minister than the Son of God from heaven had himself before revealed.

3. And the revelation is to be suited to the fruition. Full knowledge is fit only for those that must fully enjoy it.

Use. Therefore remember with what measures of heavenly knowledge we must be here content, so much as Christ hath revealed and is suitable to a distant life of faith. I have known some run into greater calamities than I will mention, by an expectation of visible communion with angels, and others by rash conceits of visions, dreams, and prophetic revelations; but the common error of Christians is, to content themselves with a feeble faith, (or at least get no better,) and then think it should be made up by somewhat like to sight or corporal sense, and to be unsatisfied because they know no more than by believing they can reach to. As if believing were but an uncertain apprehension, (with which we are unsatisfied,) and we are not content to live on that which God hath revealed, but we would fain know more, before we are ready for it; whereas we must explicitly believe all that is explicitly revealed, and implicitly believe and trust God for the rest.

We are here used to live by sight and sense, and the soul is strange to such apprehensions as are quite above sense and without it. And fain we would have God bring down the unseen things to these sensations and perceptions, and we would fain have distinct and formal knowledge of that which God hath but generally revealed. It is somewhat excusable for a soul to desire this, as it is the state of perfection to which we do aspire. But it is not well that we remember not more that sight and full fruition are reserved together for the life to come, and that we live no more thankfully and joyfully on so much as we may in the body by believing know.

Quest. What may we conjecture those things are which Paul had seen, and must not utter ?

Why should we inquire when they must not be uttered ? We may mention a possibility to rebuke our bold, unquiet thoughts.

Our souls would fain have not only analogical, but formal conceptions of the essence, substance, glory, immensity, eternity of God. Hope for much in heaven, but never for an adequate comprehension. But this is the very highest of all those things which are not to be uttered, and therefore not to be here attained.

Our souls would fain be perfect extensively and intensively in philosophy, and know heaven and earth, the spheres, or orbs, or vortices ; the magnitudes, number, distances, motions, and the nature of all the stars, and the compagination of the whole frame of being. But this is unutterable, and not here to be known.

Our souls would fain know more of the angelical nature ; what such spirits are, whether absolutely immaterial as mere acts and virtues ; or substances which are pure matter, and what their number and differences are, and how vast, and many, and distant their habitations, and what are their offices on earth or elsewhere ; and how much they know of us and our affairs, and in what subordination men, churches, and kingdoms stand to them, and they to one another, and how they are individuated, and how far one. But all these are unutterable, and locked up from us.

Our souls would fain know whether there was any world before this earth, and the creation of the six days ; and whether there was any spiritual Being, which was an eternal effect by emanation from an eternal cause, as light from the sun ; and whether the sun and stars are intellectual or sensitive, and exceed man in form, as well as in matter, and what the noble nature of fire is. But these things are unutterable, and so not knowable to us.

Our souls would fain have more sensible perceptions of themselves, as to their substance, and their separate state. Whether they are substances utterly immaterial ; how they are generated, how they subsist, and act out of the body, and how they do enjoy. How they are individuate, and yet how far one. How far one or not one with Christ, and one another. Whether they are divisible in substance as continued quantities, as well in number as *quantitates discretæ*. What place and limits do confine them (being not infinite). How far they have

still sensation; and how they see, praise, and enjoy God; and how they converse with one another; and how far they know the things on earth; and how their state before the resurrection differs from what it will be after; and how far the soul will be instrumental in the raising of the body. But all these are unutterable things.

We would fain know more of the decrees of God, and how all his acts are eternal, and yet produce their effects in time. How they are many, and yet but one, producing divers contrary effects. Many such things inquisitive nature would fain know which are unutterable.

But this must satisfy us :

1. That sinful souls, and dark, in a dark body, and a dark world, are not fit for so great a light, nor capable of it. It will put out our eyes to gaze so nearly on the sun.

2. That Christ hath revealed so much of the greatness and certainty of the heavenly glory, as he seeth meet and suitable to God's holy ends and us.

3. That the church hath so much clearer a revelation than the heathen and infidel world, as should make us thankful for our light.

4. That, if we believe the revelation of the gospel soundly, we may live a holy, joyful life, and die in the peace and triumph of our hopes.

5. That it is not by sight, but by faith that we must here live, in our wilderness expectant state.

6. That the more we cleave to God, and live by faith above the flesh and world whilst we are in it, the clearer and sweeter our apprehensions of heaven will be.

7. That God must be trusted implicitly about that which is yet unknown to us, as well as explicitly for what we know. And,

8. That what we know not now, we shall know hereafter, and the day is near. Let these things quiet our souls in health and sickness, though we are yet in darkness as to the unutterable things.

9. And always add, that what we know not, Christ knoweth for us, to whom it belongeth to prepare the place for us, and us for it, and to receive us. Had we but a friend in heaven whom we could trust, we could partly take up with their knowledge. Our Head is there, and the eyes that we must trust to are in our Head.

But how was Paul in danger of being exalted above measure, by the abundance of revelations ?

Answ. 1. It might have been above the measure meet for man in flesh, and so unsuitable to his present state.

2. It might have been unto sinful pride, as the angels fell from God, and as Adam fell, desiring to be as a God in knowledge.

Observ. 8. Even heavenly revelations may be made the matter and occasion of unmeet and sinful exaltation.

For, 1. It is the nature of sin to turn all our objects into itself to feed it. Not as they are without us *in esse reali*, but within us *in esse cognito*, the ideas in our minds. Austin saith, indeed, that grace is that *quo nemo male utetur*, but he must mean it, 1. As in itself. 2. And efficiently, grace never doth evil. But objectively in the idea or remembrance of it, it may be abused to pride.

2. And the greatest and most excellent objects as ours, give pride the greatest advantage. Heavenly revelations are far more excellent than gold, and dominion, and worldly pomp. Children are proud of fine clothes, and worldly fools of vain-glory, but saints may be more tempted to be proud of wisdom, holiness, and things above the reach of others.

3. And Satan knoweth how to fetch temptations from the highest, best, and holiest things, and his malice being as much against them as against us, he will be here most malignantly industrious.

Use. We see, then, that pride is such a sin as the holiest saint is not fully secured from; no, not when he hath been hearing unutterable words, and seeing the heavenly paradise itself, no, not if he come down from the third heavens, and bring his imperfect nature with him. Though he came newly from converse with angels, much more when he cometh from the most fervent prayers, or holiest meditations, or most heavenly and successful studies, and from hearing the most scraphic preacher, or preaching as such an one himself. He is not out of danger when he newly cometh from the most self-denying acts of mortification, or the greatest victory against temptation, or the greatest sufferings for Christ. What a sad description do Cyprian and Epiphanius make of the miscarriages of some confessors that had offered to die for Christ.

Let none, therefore, abuse the grace of Christ, and the doctrine of perseverance, by thinking that it sets him above all danger or fears of falling, unless he can say, that he is better than Paul was, and hath seen and heard more than he did in

paradise ; than Peter did with Christ ; and Moses and Elias on the holy mount. Oh, that this age did not loudly tell us, how much the real, or supposed knowledge of divine things may be abused to sinful exaltations. By one side, even by most famed teachers, to contempt of others, and lording it over the heritage of God, and racking and rending his church by their needless, yea, wicked, convulsive, imposing devices. And, by the other side, by hurtful, unwarrantable censures and separations, and speaking evil of the things which they know not. Have you heard and seen more of heaven than others ? Be, then, more holy, loving, merciful, and peaceable, and liker those in heaven than others. Read over and over James iii., show out of a good conversation your works with meekness of wisdom ; for the wisdom from above, neither befriendeth enmity to piety or peace, but is first pure, then peaceable, &c.

But how is Paul kept from being exalted above measure ? God gave him a thorn in the flesh. Note,

Observ. 9. God seeth our danger, when we see not our own, and saveth us from that which we saw not, or had not else prevented. Thanks to him, and not to us.

But how doth God do it ? By a thorn in the flesh.

Observ. 10. It is better that the flesh smart, than the soul be overmuch exalted.

No pain or suffering of the flesh, is so bad as pride, nor hath so bad effects.

Use. Why, then, do we so little fear exaltation ? How greedily do some religious people desire it. How impatient of any thing that crosses it, and humbleth them. How little do they lament it, and confess it. Is pride so rare, or so small a sin, even among preachers and zealous men ?

And why do we so much fear every thorn in the flesh ; every sickness, pain, or cross, as if pride could be prevented, or killed at too dear a rate ? And why do we quarrel with God for our sufferings, as if our disease were not so bad as his remedy. Who ever heard you in health cry out of your pride, as in sickness you do of your pain. It is a happy thorn, which lets out this corrupt and pestilent blood.

But what was this thorn in the flesh of Paul ?

Answ. The Greek word signifieth, a sharp stake, pale, nail, stub, or thorn, or any such sharp thing, that runs into the flesh, as it falls out with barefoot travellers, among such thorns and stubs.

It is strange how many expositors came to take up that injurious conceit, that it was fleshly lust ; which hath not the least colour in the text.

1. Lust would be rather likened to a fire or itch, than to a thorn.

2. It would be called an alluring, rather than a buffeting.

3. Paul had a life of labour and suffering, which would keep down fleshly lust.

4. This thorn is given him, as sent from God, to save him from sin ; but where is God said to give men lust, to save them from pride.

5. This thorn was the buffeting of a messenger of Satan ; but it is not like, that Satan could so excite lust in Paul.

6. Paul prayed thrice, that it might be taken from him ; it is not like, that Satan could so follow him with lustful motions, and that Paul would not have mentioned fasting, and other means of cure.

7. God doth not yet say, that he will yet take it from him ; but under his weakness, manifest his sustaining grace, which sounds not like an answer of a prayer against lust.

8. Paul is vindicating his ministry against accusers, by mentioning his infirmities, that is, his bodily sufferings and his revelations ; and is the telling them of his lust a meet means for this ?

9. It is called his weakness, which is his usual title for his sufferings ; but you may see, (Rom. vii.,) that he calleth lust by more odious names.

I doubt not, but it was some bodily suffering which was this thorn ; but whether by persecutors, or by a disease, is the chief doubt ; many think that it was by persecution :

1. Because it was by a messenger of Satan.

2. Because wicked men are, in Scripture, likened to thorns.

I more incline to think, it was a fit of some violent pain in the flesh, and most likely the stone, (or some such thing,) which, indeed, is a tormenting thorn in the flesh. For,

1. We read of his frequent persecutions ; but never that he so named them, or that he so much prayed against them ; but rejoiced, as Christ bids such, with exceeding joy. (Matt. v. 11, 12.) And when he and all the apostles so much exhort believers to rejoice in sufferings for Christ, is it like he would here tell men how he prayed against it

And as to the reasons for the contrary sense :—

1. Wicked men are called thorns, as hurtful ; and so are other hurting things. Christ had a crown of thorns on his head ; (John xix. 5 ;) and Paul must feel one in his flesh. Any thing hurtful is likened to thorns. (Job xli. 2 ; Prov. xxvi. 9, and xxii. 5 ; Hos. ii. 6, and ix. 6.)

2. And Satan is, in Scripture, usually mentioned as God's executioner, even in trying his children. It was into his hands that Job was put ; hurting work is fittest for an evil and destroying angel. He would sift the apostles as wheat, by outward affrighting, as well as inward tempting. However, suffering it was.

Observ. 11. A thorn in the flesh is one of God's means to keep the best from being overmuch exalted.

You have heard, that the best may need it ;

1. And the flesh hath so much hand in our sin, that it is fit to bear its part of suffering.

2. And it is the most ignoble part, and therefore its suffering hath less of hurt, and less to signify God's displeasure. Soul sufferings are the sore sufferings ; and it is the soul that is the chief agent in our duties ; and, therefore, where it is spared, we are least disabled for God's work, and our communion with him.

3. And the nearness of body and soul is such, that God can use the body to keep the soul in a humble, and a safe condition.

Use. Mistake not the nature and meaning of the flesh's suffering. Grudge not at God, if he exercise thus his greatest saints. Wonder not if the best men have sharp persecutions, pinching wants, and painful sickness, a long and sharp tormenting stone, or other such like thorn in the flesh.

1. It is but the flesh, in our brutish part ; common to beasts. If flesh must die and rot, why may it not first feel the thorn.

2. We grudged not at that health, and youth, and ease, and pleasure of it, which was the danger and temptation to the soul ; why, then, should we grudge at the pain, which tendeth to our cure.

3. If you feel not the need of suffering, you know not yourselves. Did you know your pride, and overmuch love of flesh and ease, you would say, that pain is a physic which you need, were it but to help on your willingness to die.

4. Pain here depriveth us of none of our true felicity ; it

hindereth not God's love to us ; it keeps us not from heaven ; Lazarus was in a fairer way than Dives. It takes nothing from us, but what we covenanted to forsake for Christ.

5. Do we not find that we are better when we suffer, than when we are high ? Were religious people better when victories and successes did lift them up, than they have been in their sufferings ? Did they live then more humbly, peaceably, and heavenly ?

6. The thorn will soon be taken out ; flesh will not endure long, and therefore this pain will not be long. A few more painful nights and days, and the porter which we fear will break open our prison doors, and end these weary, grievous sufferings.

Use 2. And think not the thorn is a mark, that such are worse than others. Paul was not worse ; and shall we censure such as he ?

Use 3. But let us all know the use of suffering ; what cure hath this medicine wrought ? Blessed be our wise and gracious Physician, we find it a powerful, though unpleasant remedy. It keepeth Lazarus from the sins of Dives ; from living a worldly, sensual life, and loving the prosperity of the flesh, instead of heavenly, true felicity. It keepeth us from a beastly living to our appetites and lust ; which would divert and deprave the spiritual appetite. It keepeth us from being deluded by worldly flatteries, and looking for a portion in this life, and laying up a treasure on earth, and from growing senseless and impenitent in sin. It awakeneth the soul to serious expectations of eternity, and keepeth us as within the sight or hearing of another world ; and tells us to the quick, that we must make ready to die, and to be judged, and that we have much more to do with God, than with man ; and for heaven, than earth. It taketh down pride, and all excessive respects to human approbation ; and keeping us still in the sight of the grave, doth tell us what man's body is, *mors sola fatetur, quantula sunt hominum corpuscula.* Juv. What faithful soul, that hath been bred up in the school of afflictions, doth not by experience say, that it was good for him ? How dull, how proud, how worldly might we else have been, and trifled away our lives in sloth and vanity.

And it is not for nothing that our thorns (or nails) in the flesh, are kin to the nails that pierced our Saviour on the cross.

and that we tread in his steps, and as cross-bearers are thus far conformable to his sufferings.

Be patient, then, under the pain, and careful to improve it, and thankful for the profit. And let not the soul too much condole the flesh, as if it had not at hand a better habitation and interest. It is but this "vile body;" (Phil. iii. 9;) lent us for a little time, as our clothes till night, or as our horse in a journey; when we have done with them, be content of God's separation; and till then, let us not take our corrector for our enemy. I groan too much, Lord; I complain too much; I fear too much; but my soul doth acknowledge the justice, and love, and wisdom of thy dealings, and looketh that this thorn should bring [forth sweet and happy fruit, and that all the nails of my cross being sanctified, by the blood of my crucified Redeemer, should tend to make me partaker of thy holiness.

But who put this thorn into Paul's flesh? It was one of Satan's messengers.

Observ. 11. The sufferings of the holiest persons in the flesh, may be the buffetings of a messenger of Satan.

No wonder; he that hath got somewhat of his own in us all, defiling us with sin, if he also may answerably be permitted to afflict us. He possessed many in Christ's time, and it was devils that made them dumb, and deaf, and mad; whom Christ at once delivered from devils and diseases. He is called the accuser and destroyer, and he that had the power of death, (Heb. ii. 14,) whom Christ by death and resurrection conquered. Christ calleth his healing the palsy-man the forgiving of his sin. And James saith, upon prayer and anointing, the sick should be healed, and his sins forgiven. And for the cause of sin, many Christians were sick and weak, and many fallen asleep. I cannot say, that good angels may not hurt men, and execute God's judgments; but Scripture maketh evil ones his ordinary executioners.

Use. Therefore it is no proof, that a man is not a child of God, though the devil have permission to torment his flesh. "The devil shall cast some of you into prison." (Rev. ii. 10.)

Please God, and Satan hath no power; and Christ will take out the thorn ere long, which Satan is permitted to put in.

But how doth Paul endure the thorn? He prayeth that it might depart from him.

Observ. 12. The best men are sensible of the suffering of the flesh, and may pray God to take it from them.

Grace doth not make the flesh insensible, nor separate the soul from it, though it set us above it; nor make us despise it, though it show us a higher interest and better habitation, and teach us to bear the cross, and resign the body to the will of God. A godly man may groan under his pain, and take it as a fruit of sin, and an act of the chastising justice of an offended Father, and pray against it as hurtful, though not as a remedy. They that ignorantly dispute that because Christ hath suffered all our punishment, therefore there is no penal hurt in pain or death, confute themselves if they complain under it, or pray against it, or desire such prayers from the church or any. Yea, one use of the thorn is to awaken and quicken us to prayer, like Jonas's storm.

Use. Go, then, to God in all affliction, but not with carnal, discouraged hearts. He maketh you thus feel the need of his mercy, that you may, with the prodigal, think of home, and cry for mercy, and abuse it no more. Christ did not blame the blind and lame for crying out, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on us;" nor the Canaanite woman for begging for the crumbs. Is any afflicted, let him pray, and send for the elders' prayers. The thorn in the flesh will make us feel; and feeling will teach us to repent and pray, and prayer is the means of hope for the deliverance of body and soul. Grace maketh us not stupid, yet there are some that think a man becometh not himself like a believer, if he cry and pray that the thorn may depart. What think they of David, in Psalm vi. and xvii. and lxxxviii., and many more? What think they of Christ, that prayed that, if possible, the cup might pass by him. He did it to show that even innocent nature is averse to suffering and death, though grace makes us submit to the will of God. (We continue men when we are believers.) We must mourn with them that mourn, and yet not love others better than ourselves, nor feel their thorns more sensibly than our own. We must neither despise chastenings, nor faint.

But how doth Paul pray? Doth he make any great matter of his thorns? He besought the Lord thrice that it might depart.

Observ. 13. Even earnest and oft prayer is suitable to sharp afflictions.

There is a kind of devils and, so of Satan's thorns, which go not out by fasting and prayer; no, not by Christ's own apostles.

The sense and means must be suited to the malady. God can do it upon one prayer, or upon none; but we are not so easily fitted to receive it.

And Paul, in this also, is conformed to Christ, who, in his agony, prayed thrice against his cup, though with submission.

Use 1. You see here that the apostles' gift of healing was not to be used at their own wills, not for their own flesh that it might not suffer, but for the confirmation of the faith, when it pleased the Holy Spirit. Trophimus and Epaphroditus might be sick, and Timothy need a little wine with his water, though Paul had the gift of healing.

Use 2. O let our pains drive us all to God: who hath not some? Sickneses are all abroad: what house, how few persons have not some; and yet is there a prayerless house or person? If faith have not taught you to pray as Christians, methinks feeling should teach you to pray as men. I say not that prayer must shut out food and physic; but food and physic will not do, if prayer prevail not with the Lord of all.

Use 3. And think not thrice or continued praying to be too much, or that importunity is in vain. "Christ spake a parable to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not wax faint." (Luke xviii. 1.) Whether God deliver us or not, prayer is not lost: it is a good posture for God to find us in; we may get better if we get not what we ask. Obey and pray, and trust God.

But what answer doth the Lord give to Paul's thrice praying. He saith, "My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is manifested in weakness."

1. It was not a promise that the thorn should depart.

2. It seems to be rather a denial at the present, and that Paul must not yet be cured of his thorn; for it is called a weakness that must continue for the manifesting of God's strength: and what was the sufficiency of grace and strength for, but to endure and improve the thorn?

3. But this promised grace and strength is better than that which was desired.

Observ. 14. Even oft and earnest prayer of the greatest saint for deliverance from bodily pains, may not be granted in the kind, or thing desired.

For, 1. We are not lords, but beggars, and must leave the issue to the donor: and God hath higher ends to accomplish than our ease or deliverance. It is meet that he should first fit

all his actions to his own will and glory, and next to the good of many, and to his public works in the world, and then look at our interest next.

2. And we are utterly unmeet judges of matter, manner, time, or measure, what God should give us for the body, and how much, and how, and when. When should we be sick, or pained, or persecuted, or die, if all our prayers must be absolutely granted? We know not how much better God is preparing us for by pain, and bringing us to by dismal death. He will not keep us from grace and glory because our flesh is loth to suffer and to die.

3. And this Paul also was conformed to Christ. He was heard in the thing that he feared, when, in his agony, he prayed with strong cries; but it was not by the removing of the bitter cup, but by divine strength and acceptance. And so it is with Paul; sufficient grace and strength to bear is the thing promised.

Use 1. We see, then, that they are mistaken that think Christ's promise of giving believers whatever they ask, will prove him a breaker of his promise, if the strongest believer receive not all that he asketh for the body. Was not Paul a strong believer? All that God hath promised, and we are fit to receive, God will be sure to give.

2. Let not unbelief get advantage by God's not granting such prayers for the body. Say not, 'Why, then, is it my duty to pray?' 1. You know not before-hand but God may give it: possibility bids you beg. 2. Why did Christ pray against his cup? 3. You lose not prayer; you draw nearer God; you exercise repentance and desire; you signify your dependence; you are prepared for much greater gifts.

Observ. 15. When God will not take the thorn out of our flesh, and deliver us when we pray, from bodily sufferings, he will be sure to do better for prepared persons, even to give them his sufficient grace, and manifest his strength in their pain and weakness.

It is not for want of love or power that he lets us tumble on our beds in pain, or lie under slanderers' or persecutors' rage. He that with a word could make the world, with a word can save from all this. But if we suffer not, how shall suffering graces be exercised; faith, patience, self-denial, and hope? Is not grace better than ease or life? How shall we get the benefit of

suffering if we feel it not? How shall grace and divine strength be manifested to ourselves and others?

Quest. What is it that grace is sufficient for?

Answ. 1. Not to set us up above the frailties of humanity and mortality, nor to raise us to the joy that souls in heaven have. 2. Not to every one alike, but in our several measures. Some fear pain and death more than others: some have greater patience and joy, and long to depart and be with Christ.

But to all the faithful it shall suffice, 1. To keep them from revolting from Christ, and repenting of their choice and hope. 2. To save them from charging God foolishly, as if he did them wrong. 3. It shall keep them from damning despair. When Satan sifteth them, Christ's intercession shall keep their faith from failing. Grace shall humble them, and save them from sin, and the flesh, and world: they shall cast soul and body upon Christ, and trust him in hope in their several degrees: and those that have been more believing, heavenly, and fruitful than the rest, are likeliest to have the greatest peace and comfort, especially in their greatest need.

Quest. And how is God's strength manifested in our weakness?

Answ. 1. It is manifested to ourselves, by keeping us from sin, and sinking into despair, and enabling us to bear, and trust, and wait, and usually in the peace or joy of hope. We know we are insufficient for this ourselves. When flesh and heart, as natural, fail us, God is the strength of our hearts, and our portion for ever. (Psalm lxxiii. 26.) We do not think oft before that ever we can bear and overcome, as grace enableth us.

2. And it is manifest oft to others, who shall see that power of grace in the sufferings of believers, which they did not see in their prosperity.

Use 1. Let not, then, our own weakness and insufficiency too much distress us with fears of suffering and death; yea, when we feel the thorn, let us not forget our help and strength. By grace here is meant, the loving and merciful help of God, especially giving us the inward strength by which we may not only bear, but improve the sufferings of the flesh. This body was not made to be here incorruptible or immortal; we were born in sin, and therefore born to pain and death. We have lived in sin, and no wonder if we live in sorrow; but the sufferings of our Redeemer have sanctified our sufferings. The cross is not now

such a cursed thing as guilt had made it. "He took our suffering flesh and blood, that he might destroy by death the devil that had the power of death, and deliver us who, by the fear of death, were all our lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14.) Our pain prepareth us for endless pleasures, and our sorrows for our Master's joy. When we have suffered with him, we shall reign with him: he liveth, and we shall live by him: he is risen, and we shall rise by him: he is in glory, and we must be with him.

In the mean time, his grace is sufficient for us, not only in health and ease, but in all our pain and sickness. He is not so unskilful or unkind, as to give such physic to his own, which shall do them more harm than good. Though it be grievous at the present, it brings forth the quieting fruit of righteousness; but we must first be exercised therein. Let us not, then, be his impatient patients; grace can support us and overcome. Men are not sufficient: our wit, our power, our worthiness are not sufficient; but God's grace is sufficient. If ease and life had been better than grace and glory, we might have had them; but God giveth us better than flesh would choose. Though the body be weak, the head weak, the memory weak, the stomach weak, and all weak, yet God is strong, and his strength will support us, and bring us safe to our journey's end. Lazarus lay among dogs, in weakness, at the rich man's doors, but the angels conveyed him in strength to Abraham's bosom. We must lie, and languish, and groan, in weakness, but Omnipotence is engaged for us. We must die in weakness, but we shall be raised in power, by him who will change these vile bodies, and make them like to his glorious body, by the power by which he can subdue all things to himself. (Phil. iii. 20, 21.) Let us, therefore, "lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees;" (Heb. xii. 12;) looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross.

And let us beg more for divine grace and strength, than for the departing of the thorn. Grace is better than ease and health. If the soul be a nobler part than the body, the health of it is more desirable. Bodily ease is common to brutes and wicked men: strength of grace is proper to saints: ease and health in this life are short, but holiness will be everlasting. Health fits us for fleshly pleasure, but holiness for communion with God. Oh, pray not carnally, for the flesh more than for the Spirit, for earth more than for heaven! Pray, that while

the outward man is perishing, the inward man may be renewed day by day; and that our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, may work for us an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the temporal things which are seen, but at the eternal things, which are unseen to us. (2 Cor. iv. 16—18.) Why should we grudge at any sufferings, which are for the glory of God's grace and strength: as Christ said of Lazarus, "This sickness is not unto death (that is, the end of it is not to end his life, though he die) but that the glory of God may be revealed." So pain and death are not God's ends, but the manifesting of his grace and strength.

But, alas! It is not only the flesh that is weak, but grace itself; (as it is in us, though not as it is in God and of God;) nor is it flesh only that hath the thorn, but the heart or conscience also hath its part. The spirit of a man (if sound and well) will sustain (his bodily) infirmities: but a wounded spirit, who can bear? If faith were not weak, if hope, and love, and desire were not weak, the weakness of the body might well be borne. If sin and guilt were no wound or thorn in the soul and conscience, we could be more indifferent as to the flesh, and almost as quietly bear our own pain and death, as our neighbour's. Though it is hard to say as *Tertullian*, *Nihil crus sentit in nervo, cum animus est in celo*; yet our content and joy would overcome the evil of our suffering. But, alas! when soul and body must be both at once lamented, this, this is hardly borne! Lord! seeing it is thy sufficient grace, and not my bodily ease which I must trust to, and my weakness must manifest thy strength: O let not grace also be in me insufficient and weak! O let not faith be weak, nor hope, nor love, nor heavenly desires and foretastes be weak! Nor patience and obedience weak! Head is weak, and heart is weak; but if faith also be weak, what shall support us: at least let it be unfeigned and effectual, and attain its end, and never fail. Flesh is failing, and health (as to its proper strength) is failing. But be thou my God, the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. And whatever thorn the flesh must feel, yet let me finish my course with joy. Amen.

I have run over many things in a text so suitable, that I could not well spare any of them. Those that well knew our deceased friend, will say, that except Paul's extraordinary rapture, and apostolical privileges, in Paul's case I have been describing his.

I come not to gratify the interest of any of his relations, to speak to you according to custom of a stranger whom I knew not; but for the honour of God's grace, and our own edification, to tell you what I knew by my most faithful and familiar friend. It is almost forty years since I heard him preach in the city of Gloucester; there was his entrance, and there he lived, (under a papist bishop of the Protestant church, Godfry Goodman, as his last testament in print professed,) there he abode during the civil wars, and wrote the history of what happened there. He was after removed to the city of Chichester, and from thence to Bramshot in Hampshire, where he continued till 1662, when, silenced with the rest, he was cast out. He lived peaceably in London, without gathering any assembly for public preaching. Dwelling in Totteridge with Alderman Web, his great love drew him there, to remove to me, with whom a while he took up his habitation. In all the time that he was with me, I remember not that ever we differed once in any point of doctrine, worship, or government, ecclesiastical or civil, or that ever we had one displeasing word.

The king's licenses encouraged his old flock at Chichester to invite him thither, though they had the help of another nonconformist before, with whom he joined with love and concord. God many years afflicted him with the disease that was his death; while the pain was tolerable to nature, he endured it, and ceased not preaching till a fortnight before he was carried up to London to have been cut. But before that could be done, in about a fortnight more he died. This is the short history of his course.

But I will next give you his true character, and then tell you how like his case was to Paul's here in my text, and then tell you to what use I do all this.

I. He was a man so blameless in all his conversation, that I may say as I did here lately of another (Alderman Ashhurst) that I never heard one person accuse or blame him, except for nonconformity, and that difference from others in these divided times, which his book expresses. Of which more anon.

II. Were it not that I have said we never differed, and so made myself an incompetent judge, I should have said that I thought him a man of great clearness and soundness in religion, much by the advantage of the calmness and considerateness of his mind.

III. He was of so great moderation and love of peace, that

he hated all that was against it, and would have done any thing for concord in the church, except sinning against God, and hazarding salvation. In the matter of the five articles, or arminianism, he went the reconciling way, and I have seen a compendium of his thoughts in a manuscript, which is but the same with what I have delivered in my Cath. Theol. but better fitted to readers that must have much in a few words.

He constantly at Totteridge joined in all the worship with the public assembly, and had no sinful, separating principles. He was for Catholic union, and communion of saints, and for going no further from any churches or Christians than they force us, or than they go from Christ. He then preached only to such neighbours as came into the house between the times of the public worship. He was for loving and doing good to all, and living peaceably with all as far as was in his power. Something in episcopacy, presbytery, and independency, he liked, and some things he disliked in all; but with all sorts lived in love and peace, that did seek the furtherance of men's salvation. Many parts of conformity he could have yielded to, but not to all, nothing less than all would satisfy.

IV. In all he was true to his conscience, and warped not for a party's interest or faction. If all the nonconformists in England had refused, he would have conformed alone, if the terms had been reduced to what he thought lawful. And he studied that with great impartiality.

V. He managed his ministry with faithfulness and prudence: he took it for heinous sacrilege to alienate himself from the sacred office to which he was devoted, though men forbad it him. But he thought not the same circumstances of ministration necessary to all times and places: he was not for open preaching to great numbers, when it was like by accident to do more hurt than good: nor yet for forbearing it, when it was like to do more good than hurt. He spared not his flesh, but held on from year to year under his great pain of the stone in the bladder, till within a month before he died. Much less would the prohibition of any restrain him, to whom God gave no such forbidding power.

VI. He served God with self-denial, not with any selfish or worldly designs: he never looked after preferment or riches, or any great matters in the world: he had daily bread, and was therewith content.

VII. He suffered his part in our common lot, 1662, Aug.

22, (ejected and silenced with about 2000 more,) with as little murmuring as any man that I knew. I never heard him dishonour the king, nor speak much against those by whom he suffered, or rip up their faults, unless a rare and necessary self-defence be called an accusing them. I never heard him so much as complain how much church-maintenance he was deprived of, nor of the difficulties of his low, dejected case.

VIII. He was a great hater of that base pride and envy, which possesseth too many of the sacred office, who grudge if others be preferred before them; and if the people go from them to others for their greater edification, and think themselves wronged if they be not followed and applauded, either above, or equal with more worthy men: he was very careful to preserve the reputation of his brethren, and rejoiced in the success of their labours, as well as of his own, and a most careful avoider of all divisions, contentions, or offences. And he was very free in acknowledging by whom he profited, and preferring others before himself.

IX. He was very much in the study of his own heart, by strict examination, as his cabinet-papers, which may come to light, make known, as I had also occasion otherwise to know.

X. By this examination he was confidently assured of his own sincerity in the true love of God, and of holiness, for itself, and such like evidences which he wrote down renewing his examination as occasion required: and though he had known what it was to be tempted to doubt of the life to come, he was fully settled against all such doubts and temptations.

XI. But though he had a settled assurance both of the truth of the Gospel, and the life to come, and of his own satisfaction and sincerity: yet, so lively were his apprehensions of the greatness of his approaching change, and the weight of an everlasting state, and what it is to enter upon another world, that he was not without such fears, as in our frail condition here, poor mortals that are near death are liable to. And indeed, fear signifieth a belief of the word of God, and the life to come, much more than dull insensibility: but he signified his belief both by fear and hope, and strong assurance.

XII. He had the comfort of sensible growth in grace. He easily perceived a notable increase of his faith, and holiness, and heavenliness, and humility, and contempt of worldly vanity,

especially of late years, and under his affliction, as the fruit of God's correcting rod.

I have truly given you the description of the man, according to my familiar knowledge. I shall yet review the similitude of his case with this of Paul described in my text.

I. Paul was accused by envious, contentious teachers : and so was he ; though I never heard any one person else speak evil of him ; as is said, they that upbraided not Paul with his former persecution, nor had any crime to charge him with, yet accused his ministry : as they said of Daniel, " We shall find no fault against him, except it be concerning the law of his God." His preaching and writings, though all for peace, were the matter of his accusations : the bishop blamed him for preaching, even when the king had licensed him : and a nameless writer published a bloody invective against his pacificatory book, called ' The Interest of England,' as if it had been written to raise a war. The enemies of peace were his enemies.

II. He took boasting to be inexpedient, as Paul did : and when he was silenced as unworthy to be suffered in the ministry, he once offered a modest defence to the bishop, and wrote a short and peaceable account of his judgment about the sin of schism, in his own vindication.

III. He had (though not the extacy of Paul, yet) great knowledge of things divine and heavenly to have been the matter of his glory.

IV. The heavenly paradise was the place of his hopes, where he daily studied to lay up his treasure, which had his chiefest thoughts and care.

V. He found by experience that an immortal soul is not so tied to this body of flesh, but that it can get above it, and all its interest and pleasure, and live on the hopes of unseen glory.

VI. As he knew the incapacity of mortals to have formal and adequate conceptions of the state of the heavenly paradise and separated souls ; so he submitted to God's concealing will, and lived on the measure of gospel revelation.

VII. He knew the danger of being exalted above measure, by occasion of holy knowledge ; and how apt man is to be so puffed up.

VIII. God himself saved him from that danger, by his humbling, wholesome, sharper remedy.

IX. A thorn in the flesh was God's remedy to keep him in a

serious, humble frame ; three great stones were found in his bladder, and one small one in a corrupted kidney ; and how painful a thorn these were for many years, it is easy to conjecture.

X. Satan was permitted to try him as Job, not only by the pain of his flesh, but also by reproaches, as aforesaid, and by casting him out of his ministry, as unworthy to preach the gospel of Christ, unless he would say, swear, and do all that was by men imposed, and the rest of those afflictions, which are contained in such an ejected, impoverished, calumniated state, are described in the late and former experience of many such.

XI. Though I never heard him pray against poverty or reproach, yet for the liberty of his ministry he did, that he might preach that gospel of salvation. And pain forced him to have recourse to God, for deliverance from the thorn in his flesh. And if Christ and Paul prayed thrice with earnestness, no wonder if continued pain made him continue his suit to God.

XII. As Christ was heard in the thing which he feared, and yet must drink that cup, and Paul, instead of the departing of the one, was promised sufficient grace, and the manifesting of God's strength in his pain and weakness ; so it pleased not God to take away the thorn from our dear brother's flesh ; but he did better for him, and gave him his supporting help, and an increase of grace, and showed his own strength in all his weakness ; and also hastened his final deliverance, beyond expectation.

And now he is past all, at rest with Christ, and all the blessed. We see not them, but they see God and God seeth us, and is preparing us for the same felicity ; and if it be by the same means, and we must bear the cross, and feel the thorn, it will be wholesome and short, and good is the will and work of God. Lord, let me not account ease, honour, or life dear to me, that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry received of the Lord, and come in season and peace to thee.

And is not this providence of God, and this example of our deceased friend of use to us ? Yes, no doubt, of manifold use.

I. It is of great use to all the land, to good and bad, to observe God's threatening in the removal of his servants. Oh ! how many excellent Christians, and faithful ministers of Christ,

have been taken hence within a few months ; the same week we hear of four or five more besides our brother, and some of them the most excellent, useful men. And, is it not time, 1. To repent of our neglect of such helps as God is now removing? 2. And to be presently awakened to use them, better before the rest be taken away? Alas ! poor souls, what a case are you in, if you die, or the word be taken from you, before you are regenerated, and prepared for a better life. It is not so much their loss and hurt, as yours, which Satan endeavoureth in silencing so many hundred such ; and it is your heavy punishment, more than theirs, which God inflicteth by their death. O speedily repent, before that death have stopped the mouths which called you to repentance. And it should awaken the best to prepare for death, and for public suffering ; it seems there is some great evil to come, when God thus takes away the best. Yea, if it should be a forerunner of a better state, yet all, save two of the old stock, that dishonoured God in the wilderness, must fall, and it was by bloody wars, (a dreadful means,) that Joshua, and the new generation, were to possess the land of promise.

II. It is of use to us, unworthy ministers of Christ, who yet survive, 1. It calleth loudly to us, to work while it is day, for our night is near, when we cannot work ; death will shortly silence us all more effectually than men have done. Do Gods work prudently, do it patiently, peaceably, and in as much concord, and true obedience, as you can ; but be sure you do it, whoever forbid it, or be against it, as long as God or yourselves have not rendered you incapable. Whatever silencers say against it, necessity is upon you ; God calls for it, souls call for it. The charge is dreadful ; (2 Tim. iv. 1, 2;) your vows call for it ; Satan's malice, and the number of soul-betrayers and murderers must provoke you ; our time is short : souls are precious : Christ the chief shepherd dearly purchased them, and will judge you according to your works. It will not justify your neglect to say, ' Men forbade me : sufferings were prepared for me : bishops and famous divines wrote learned books to prove that preaching was to me a sin, and that I was bound to forbear it when forbidden.' 2. And it telleth us, that we, as well as others, must prepare for the sharpest trials from God ; no thorn in the flesh so sharp and painful, which we may not feel ; no death so violent or sudden, but we may undergo : love and hatred are not known by outward events, prosperity, or adversity. A great difference Solomon acknowledgeth between the

good and the bad, the righteous and wicked; him that sacrificeth, (or worshippeth God,) and him that doth not; him that sweareth, (perjuringly, or profanely,) and him that feareth (such) an oath; some are loved of God, and some are hated. And this difference is manifest in such disposals, even of prosperity and adversity, as tend to their greater holiness and happiness, which shall manifest the difference fully, and for ever; but outward events manifest it not in themselves; all such things come alike to all; yea, the cross is more laid on the godly, than the wicked. O therefore, away with the two disciples' desires of church-preferment, and worldly dignity, and prepare to drink of Christ's cup, and be baptised with his baptism. (Eccles. ix. 1—3; Matt. xx. 22, 23.) Learn daily how to bear slanders and persecutions from men, even from christian teachers; and how to lie in fleshly pains, night and day; and how to die: and all this in faith, and peace, and joy, at least in the quiet hope of everlasting joy.

III. And without any disgracing, or provoking design, but merely in conscience and compassion to the souls of the people, and of our reverend brethren themselves; I do humbly entreat the right reverend, and reverend imposing clergy, to lay by awhile, if possible, all unrighteous prejudice, and partiality, and worldly interests and respects, and consider that they also must die, and as they will stand to it at last, to resolve these questions:—

I. Whether those terms of church concord and peace be wisely and justly made, which are too narrow to receive such men as this (for faith, knowledge, peaceableness, blamelessness, holiness, &c.) into the ministry, communion of their church, or to endure them out of a jail? Whether wise and good men could find no better? And whether Christ ever directed the church to exclude such, or did not plainly require the contrary? And whether the apostles ever excluded such, or made such rules?

II. Whether they think in their hearts, that it were better all the good were undone, which hath been done by non-conformists these eighteen years, to the ministerial furthering of knowledge, repentance, holiness, and salvation, than that such should have preached the gospel when forbidden?

III. Whether it will be peace to your consciences at the judgment of Christ, that any of you have furthered the silencing of such, and their other sufferings?

IV. Whether they that have written and preached against their preaching, or for their silencing, and the execution of the laws against them, or persuaded them to give over their work themselves, and reproached and accused them for doing it, be not engaged in this frightful cause ?

V. Is it not gross partiality, if you will cherish men of ignorance, viciousness, or far less worth, while such as these are thought intolerable, merely because the former are more obedient to you, than fear of sinning will suffer these to be.

VI. Was that church therein guided by the Spirit of Christ, which made the canon which *ipso facto* excommunicateth such ?

VII. If you had known as many of the (about) two thousand silenced, and as well as I have done, how much of the grace of God shined in them ; is it possible, that any man, that hath the true fear and love of God, and sense of everlasting things, could ever, by any pretences of church government or order, or upon any bias of interest, have consented to their silencing and sufferings ?

Some will think, that in partiality, I over magnify men, because they were of my own mind and party. I have, (besides some pious women,) written the characters, and published the praises of divers, of Mr. Richard Vines, Mr. John Janeway, Mr. Joseph Allen, Mr. Henry Stubbs, Mr. Wadsworth, and now Mr. John Corbet, and lately one layman, Alderman Ashhurst ; and he that hath now received them, whom such as you cast out, or vilified, knoweth that I have in knowledge of them, and love to Christ, whose grace shined in them, spoken simply the truth from my heart ; and it is in a time and place, where it is fully known, and feareth no confutation ; and the history shall live, to the shame of church-dividing, tearing principles, and all thorny, hurtful dispositions, and to the encouragement of the faithful, and the imitation of those that in time to come shall by faith, patience, and well-doing, seek for immortality, and eternal life, by serving our Redeemer, and pleasing God.

THE
FAREWELL SERMON

OF
RICHARD BAXTER;

PREPARED TO HAVE BEEN PREACHED TO HIS HEARERS

AT KIDDERMINSTER

AT HIS DEPARTURE, BUT FORBIDDEN.

TO THE
INHABITANTS
OF THE
BOROUGH AND FOREIGN OF KIDDERMINSTER,
IN
THE COUNTY OF WORCESTER.

DEAR FRIENDS,

WHILE I was lately turning up the rubbish of my old papers, I found this sermon in the bottom, which I had quite forgotten that I kept, but thought it had been cast away with many hundred others. Much of the last sheet was added to the sermon after I came from you; and I remember that when I intended to send you this sermon as my farewell, I durst not then have so much converse with you, for your own sakes, lest it should raise more enmity against you, and your displeasing circumstances of religious practice should be said to come from my continued counsels to you.

I have lately taken my farewell of the world, in a book which I called 'My Dying Thoughts: ' my pain of body and debility increasing, and my flesh being grown to me more grievous than all my enemies or outward troubles. I remembered the benefit I often received upon your prayers; and craving the continuance of them, till you hear of my dissolution, therewith I send this, as my special farewell to yourselves, whom I am bound to remember with more than ordinary love and thankfulness, while I am

RICHARD BAXTER.

BAXTER'S FAREWELL SERMON.

JOHN xvi. 22.

And ye now, therefore, have sorrow ; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

MY DEARLY BELOVED IN OUR DEAREST LORD,

I WILL so far consent to your troubled thoughts of this unwelcome day, as to confess that to me, as well as you, it somewhat resembleth the day of death. 1. Death is the separation of the dearest consorts, soul and body ; and how near the union is betwixt us, both that of relation, and that of affection, which must admit this day of some kind of dissolution, I will rather tell to strangers than to you. 2. Death is unwelcome both to soul and body of itself (though it destroy not the soul, it doth the body.) So dear companions part not willingly. Your hearts and minds are here so over-forward in the application, that words may be well spared, where sense hath taken so deep possession. 3. Death is the end of human converse here on earth. We must see and talk with our friends here no more. And this our separation is like to end that converse between you and me, which formerly we have had in the duties of our relations. We must no more go up together, as formerly, to the house of God ; I must no more speak to you publicly in his name, nor solace my own soul, in opening to you the gospel of salvation, nor in the mention of his covenant, his grace, or kingdom. Those souls that have not been convinced and converted, are never like to hear more from me for their conviction or conversion. I have finished all the instruction, reproof, exhortation, and persuasion, which ever I must use, in order to their salvation. I must speak here no more to inform the ignorant, to reform the wicked, to reduce the erroneous, to search the hypocrite, to humble the proud, to bow the obstinate, or to bring the worldly, the impenitent, and ungodly to the knowledge of the word, themselves, and God. I must speak no more to strengthen the weak, to comfort the afflicted, nor to

build you up in faith and holiness. Our day is past; our night is come, when we cannot work as formerly we have done! My opportunities here are at an end. 4. Death is the end of earthly comforts, and our separation is like to be the end of that comfortable communion, which God for many years hath granted us. Our public and private communion hath been sweet to us. The Lord hath been our pastor, and hath not suffered us to want. He made us lie down in his pleasant pastures, and hath led us by the silent streams! (Psalm xxiii. 1, 2.) He restored our souls, and his very rod and staff did comfort us, but his smiting and scattering time is come. These pleasures now are at an end. 5. Death is the end of human labours, there is no ploughing or sowing, no building or planting in the grave. And so doth our separation end the works of our mutual relation in this place. 6. Death is the effect of painful sickness, and usually of the folly, intemperance, or oversight of ourselves. And, though our conscience reproach us not with gross unfaithfulness, yet are our failings so many, and so great, as force us to justify the severity of our Father, and to confess that we deserve this rod. Though we have been censured by the world as being over-strict, and doing too much for the saving of our own and others' souls, yet it is another kind of charge that conscience hath against us. How earnestly do we now wish that we had done much more; that I had preached more fervently, and you had heard more diligently, and we had all obeyed God more strictly, and done more, for the souls of the ignorant, careless, hardened sinners that were among us! It is just with God that so dull a preacher should be put to silence, that could ever speak without tears and fervent importunity to impenitent sinners, when he knew that it was for no less than the saving of their souls, and foresaw the joys which they would lose, and the torment which they must endure, if they repented not. With what shame and sorrow do I now look back upon the cold and lifeless sermons which I preached; and upon those years' neglect of the duty of private instructing of your families, before we set upon it orderly and constantly. Our destruction is of ourselves! Our undervaluings and neglects have forfeited our opportunities. As good Melancthon was wont to say, '*In vulneribus nostris proprias agnoscimus pennas.*' The arrow that woundeth us, was feathered from our own wings. 7. Death useth to put surviving friends into a dark and mourning habit. Their lamentations are the chief part of funeral solemnities. And in this also we have our part. The compassion of condolers

is greater than we desire, for sorrow is apt to grow unruly, and exceed its bounds, and bring on more sufferings by lamenting one, and also to look too much at the instruments, and to be more offended at them than at our sins. 8. But death is the end of all the living. The mourners also must come after us, and, alas! how soon! It maketh our fall more grievous to us, to foresee how many must ere long come down! How many hundred pastors must shortly be separated from their flocks. If there were no epidemical malady to destroy us, our ministry hath its mortality. Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever? (Zech. i. 5.) This made us the more importunate with you in our ministry, because we knew that we must preach to you, and pray with you, and instruct you, and watch over you, but a little while. Though we knew not what instrument death would use, we knew our final day was coming, when we must preach, and exhort, and pray our last with you! We knew that it behoved us to work while it was day (and, oh, that we had done it better!) because the night was coming when none could work. (John ix. 4.) 9. And as it is appointed to all men once to die, so after death there followeth judgment. And we also have our further judgment to undergo. We must expect our hour of temptation. We must be judged by men, as well as chastened by God. We must prepare to bear the reproach and slanders of malicious tongues, and the unrighteous censures of those that know us not, and of those who think it their interest to condemn us. And we must also call ourselves to judgment. We are like to have unwelcome leisure, to review the days and duties which are past. It will then be time for us to call ourselves to account of our preaching and studies, and other ministerial works, and to sentence our labours and our lives, and it will be time for you to call yourselves to account of your hearing and profiting, and to ask, 'How have we used the mercies which are taken from us?' Yea, God himself will judge us according to our works. He will not justify us, if we have been unfaithful in our little, and have been such as Satan and his instruments, the accusers of the brethren, do report us. But if we have been faithful, we may expect his double justification. 1. By pardon he will justify us from our sins. 2. By plea and righteous sentence, he will justify us against the false accusations of our enemies, and that is enough. How small a thing should it seem to us, to be judged of man, who must stand or fall to the final sentence of the Almighty God. 10. The separated soul and body do retain

their relations, and the soul its inclination to a re-union with its body. And though our nearest obligations may be now dissolved, and the exercise of our communion hindered, yet I know we shall never forget each other, nor shall the bond of love which doth unite us, be ever loosed and made void. And so much of our relation shall still continue, as intimated in those texts, 1 Cor. iv. 15, 16, xii. 14; Phil. iv. 1, &c. 11. And the power of death will not be everlasting, a resurrection and re-union there will be at last, but whether in this world, I cannot prophesy. I am apter to think that most of us must die in the wilderness, and that our night must bear some proportion with our day. But things unrevealed belong only unto God. It sufficeth me to be sure of this, that as our kingdom, so our comforts are not of this world, and that as Christ, so his servants under him, may say, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me, (Heb. ii. 13,) and that we shall present you as chaste virgins unto Christ." (2 Cor. xi. 2.) "And therefore we have preached, taught, and warned, that we might present you perfect in Christ Jesus." (Col. i. 28.) "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing, are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and our joy." (1 Thess. ii. 19, 20.)

But yet the resemblance between death and this our separation, holdeth not in all things. 1. It is not I, nor any pastor, that is the church's soul or life. This is the honour of Christ, the Head. Being planted into him, you may live, though all his ministers were dead, or all your teachers driven into corners. (Isa. xxx. 20.) 2. The continuance of your church state dependeth not on the continuance of any one single pastor whatsoever. God can provide you others to succeed us, that may do his work for you more successfully than we. And could I but hope that they should be as able, and holy, and diligent as I desire, how little should I partake with you in this day's sorrows. Had I not given you these exceptions, malicious tongues would have reported that I made myself your life or soul, and take the churches to be all dead, when such as I are silenced and cast out. But I remember Psalm xii.

Though what I have said, and what you feel, may make you think that a funeral sermon is most seasonable on such a day, yet I have rather chosen to preach to you the doctrine of rejoicing, because you sorrow not as men that have no hope, and because I must consider what tendeth most to your strength and steadfastness; and that you may see herein I imitate our

Lord, I have chosen his words to his troubled disciples, before his departure from them. (John xvi. 22.) And though I make no question but it will be said with scorn, that thus I make myself as Christ, and that I seditiously encourage you by the expectations of my restitution, yet will I not therefore forbear to use my Saviour's consolatory words, but will remember to whom, and on what occasion, he said, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind; and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." (Matt. xv. 13, 14.)

The words are Christ's comforts to his orphans, sorrowful disciples, expressing first, their present condition, and that which they were now to taste of, and secondly, their future state. Their present case is a state of sorrow, because that Christ must be taken from them. Their future case will be a state of joy, which is expressed, 1. In the futurity of the cause, "but I will see you again." 2. In the promise of the effect, "and your heart shall rejoice." 3. In the duration and invincibility of it, "and your joy no man taketh from you," or "shall take from you." He had before likened their sorrows on this occasion, to the pains of a woman in her child-bearing, which is but short, and endeth in joy. And in relation to that similitude, the Syriac translatheth *λῆπρον*, 'sickness,' and the Persian translatheth it 'calamity.' Some expositors limit the cause of their sorrows to the absence of Christ, or that death of his which will for a time both shake their faith, and astonish their hopes, and deprive them of their former comforts. And others limit the word 'therefore' to the following crosses or sufferings which they must undergo for the sake of Christ, and accordingly they interpret the cause of their succeeding joy. But I see no reason but both are included in the text, but principally the first, and the other consequently. As if he had said, 'When you see me crucified, your hearts and hopes will begin to fail, and sorrow to overwhelm your minds, and you will be exposed to the fury of the unbelieving world; but it will be but for a moment, for when you see that I am risen again, your joy will be revived, and my Spirit afterwards, and continual encouragements shall greatly increase and perpetuate your joys, which no persecutions or sufferings shall deprive you of, but they shall at last be perfected in the heavenly everlasting joys.' The cause of their sorrow is first his absence, and next their sufferings with him in the world, when the bridegroom is taken from them they must fast, that is, live an afflicted kind of life in

various sorrows; and the causes of their succeeding joy, are first, his resurrection, and next his Spirit, which is their comforter, and lastly, the presence of his glory at their reception into his glorious kingdom. Their sorrow was to be short, as that of a woman in travail, and it was to have a tendency to their joy. And their joy was to be sure and near, "I will see you again," and great, "your heart shall rejoice," and everlasting, "your joy no man taketh from you."

The sense of the text is contained in these six doctrinal propositions.

Doct. 1. Sorrow goeth before joy with Christ's disciples.

Doct. 2. Christ's death and departure was the cause of his disciples' sorrows.

Doct. 3. The sorrows of Christ's disciples are but short. It is but 'now.'

Doct. 4. Christ will again visit his sorrowful disciples, though at the present he seem to be taken from them.

Doct. 5. When Christ returneth or appeareth to his disciples, their sorrows will be turned into joy.

Doct. 6. The joy of Christians in the return or re-appearing of their Lord is such as no man shall take from them.

Of these, by God's assistance, I shall speak in order, and therefore be but short on each.

Doct. 1. Sorrow goeth before joy with Christ's disciples.

The evening and the morning make their day. They must sow in tears before they reap in joy. They must have trouble in the world, and peace in Christ. God will first dwell in the contrite heart, to prepare it to dwell with him in glory. The pains of travail must go before the joy of the beloved birth.

Quest. What kind of sorrow is it that goeth before our joy?

Ans. 1. There is a sorrow positively sinful, which doth, but should not, go before our joy. Though this be not meant directly in the text, yet it is too constant a foregoer of our comforts. It is not the joys of innocency that are our portion, but the joys of restoration; and the pains of our disease go before the ease and comfort of our recovery. We have our worldly sorrows, and our passionate and peevish sorrows, like Jonah's for the withering of his gourd. According to the degree of our remaining corruption, we have our sorrows, which must be sorrowed for again. Sometimes we are troubled at the providences of God, and sometimes at the dealings of men; at the words or doings of enemies, of friends, of all about us. We are grieved if we have not what we would have, and when we

have it, it becomes our greater grief: nothing well pleaseth us, till we so devote ourselves to please our God, as to be pleased in the pleasing of him.

2. And we have our sorrows, which are sinful through our weakness and imperfection, when, through the languishing feebleness of our souls, we are overmuch troubled at that which we may lawfully sorrow for with moderation; when impatience causeth us to make a greater matter of our afflictions than we ought. If God do but try us with wants or crosses; if we lose our friends, or if they prove unkind; we double the weight of the cross by our impatience. This cometh from the remnants of unmortified selfishness, carnality, and overloving earthly things. Were they less loved, they would be less sorrowed for. If we had seen their vanity, and mortification had made them nothing to us, we should then part with them as with vanity and nothing. It is seldom that God or men afflict us, but we therefore afflict ourselves much more. As the destruction of the wicked, so the troubles of the godly is chiefly of themselves.

3. There is a mere natural suffering or sorrow, which is neither morally good or bad. As to be weary with our labour, to be pained with our diseases; to be sensible of hunger and thirst, of cold and heat; to be averse to death as death, as Christ himself was; and at last to undergo it, and lie down in the dust. There are many sorrows which are the fruits of sin, which yet, in themselves, are neither sin nor duty.

4. There are castigatory sorrows from the hand of God, which have a tendency to our cure, if we use them according to his appointment. Such are all the foresaid natural sufferings, considered as God's means and instruments of our benefit. He woundeth the body to heal the soul: he lanceth the sore, to let out the corruption: he letteth us bleed to cure our inflammations and apostemated parts. He chasteneth all that he loveth and receiveth; (Heb. xii. 1—14;) and we must be subject to a chastening Father if we will live; for he doth it for our profit, "that we may be partakers of his holiness."

5. There are honourable and gainful sufferings from blind malicious wicked men, for the cause of Christ and righteousness, such as the gospel frequently warneth believers to expect. These are the sorrows that have the promises of fullest joy, not that the mere suffering in itself is acceptable to God; but the love which is manifested by suffering for him, is that which he cannot but accept: so that the same measure of sufferings are more or less acceptable, as there is more or less love to God

expressed by them, and as the honour of Christ is more or less intended in them. For to give the body to be burned without love will profit us nothing. But when the cause is Christ's, and the heart intendeth him as the end of the suffering, (1 Cor. xiii. 3,) then "blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," &c. (Matt. v.10—12.)

6. There are penitential and medicinal sufferings, for the killing of sin, and helping on the work of grace, which are made our duty. In the former we are to be but submissive patients, but in these we must be obedient agents, and must inflict them on ourselves. Such are the sorrows of contrition and true repentance; the exercises of fasting, abstinence, and humiliation; the grief of the soul for God's displeasure, for the hiding of his face, and the abatement of his graces in us; and all the works of mortifying self-denial, and forbearing all forbidden pleasures which God doth call his servants to, though in the primitive and principal part of holiness there is nothing but what is sweet and pleasant to a soul, so far as it is holy: (as the love of God and the love of others, and worshipping God, and doing good, and joy, and thanks, and praise, and obedience, &c.) Yet the medicinal parts of grace, or holiness, have something necessarily in them that is bitter, even to nature as nature, and not only as corrupt, such as are contrition, self-denial, mortification, abstinence, as aforesaid.

7. There are charitable sorrows for the dishonour of God, and for the sin, hurt, and miseries of others. These, also, are our duties, and we must be agents in them as well as patients. As we must first pray for the hallowing of the name of God, and the coming of his kingdom, and the doing of his will on earth as it is done in heaven; so we must most grieve for the abuse and dishonour of God's name, the hindering of his kingdom, and the breaking of his laws; that so many nations see not the peril, and know not God, and have not the gospel, or will not receive it, but live in rebellion against their Maker, and in blindness, obstinacy, and hardness of heart, and are given up to commit uncleanness with greediness; (Eph. iv. 18, 19;) that so many nations which are called Christians, are captivated in ignorance and superstition, by the blindness, pride, carnality, and covetousness of their usurping, self-obtruding guides; that so many men professing Christianity have so little of the knowledge or power of what they generally and ignorantly profess, and live to the shame of their profession, the great dishonour

and displeasure of their Lord, and the grief or hardening of others; that the church of Christ is broken into so many sects and factions, possessed with such an uncharitable, destroying zeal against each other, and persecuting their brethren as cruelly as Turks and heathens do; that the best of Christians are so few, and yet so weak and liable to miscarriages. All these are the matter of that sorrow which God hath made our duty; and all these sorts of sorrow do go before a Christian's fullest joy.

Reason 1. God will have some conformity between the order of nature and of grace. Non-entity was before created entity; the evening before morning; infancy before maturity of age; weakness before strength; the buried seed before the plant, the flower, and fruit; and infants cry before they laugh; weakness is soon hurt, and very querulous. No wonder, then, if our sorrows go before our joys.

2. Sin goeth before grace, and therefore our sorrows are before our joys. The seed is first fruitful which was first sown. Joy, indeed, hath the elder parent, *in esse reali et absoluto*, but not *in esse causali et relativo*. We are the children of the first Adam, before we are children of the second; we are born flesh of flesh, before we are born spiritual of the Spirit. (1 Cor. xv.; John iii. 6.) And where Satan goeth before Christ, it is equal that sorrow be before joy.

3. Our gracious Father and wise Physician doth see that this is the fittest method for our cure. That we may deny ourselves, we must know how little we are beholden to ourselves, and must smart by the fruit of our sin and folly before we are eased by the fruit of love and grace. It is the property of the flesh to judge by sense, and therefore sense shall help to mortify it. The frowns of the world shall be an antidote against its flatteries. It killeth by pleasing, and therefore it may help our cure by displeasing us. Loving it is men's undoing; and hurting us is the way to keep us from overloving it. These wholesome sorrows do greatly disable our most dangerous temptations, and preserve us from the pernicious poison of prosperity. They rouse us up when we are lazy and ready to sit down; they awake us when we are ready to fall asleep; they drive us to God when we are ready to forget him, and dote upon a deceiver; they teach us part of the meaning of the gospel; without them we know not well what "a Saviour," a "promise," a "pardon," "grace," and many other gospel terms, do signify. They teach us to pray, and teach us to hear and read with understanding;

they tell us the value of all our mercies, and teach us the use of all the means of grace. They are needful to fix our flashy, light, inconstant minds, which are apt to be gazing upon every bait, and to be touching or tasting the forbidden fruit; and to be taken with those things which we had lately cast behind our backs, till medicinal sorrow doth awake our reason, and make us see the folly of our dreams. Yea, if sorrow check us not, and make us wise, we are ready to lay by our grace and wit, and to follow any goblin in the dark, and, like men bewitched, to be deceived by we know not what, and to go on as a bird to the fowler's snare, as an ox to the slaughter, and as a fool to the correction of the stocks. (Prov. vii. 22, 23.)

4. Moreover precedent sorrows, will raise the price of following joys. They will make us more desirous of the day of our deliverance, and will make it the welcomer to us when it comes. Heaven will be seasonable after a life of so much trouble; and they that come out of great tribulation, will joyfully sing the praises of their Redeemer. (Rev. vii. 14.)

5. And God will have the members conformed to their Head; (Luke xiv. 28, 33;) this was Christ's method, and it must be our's; (Rom. viii. 17, 18;) we must take up the cross, and follow him, if ever we will have the crown; and we must suffer with him if we will be glorified with him. (2 Tim. ii. 12.) Though the will of God be the reason which alone should satisfy his creatures, yet these reasons show you the equity and goodness of his ways.

Use 1. If sorrow before joy be God's ordinary method of dealing with his most beloved servants, learn hence to understand the importance of your sorrows! You say as Baruch, "Wo is me now; for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow. I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest." (Jer. xlv. 3.) You are ingenious in recounting and aggravating your afflictions. But are you as ingenious in expounding them aright; do you not judge of them rather by your present sense, than by their use and tendency? You will not do so by the bitterness of a medicine, or the working of a purge or vomit. You will like it best when it worketh in that way as usually it doth with them that cureth. And should you not be glad to find that God taketh that way with you, which he most usually takes with those that he saveth. Sure you do not set light by the love of God. Why, then, do you complain so much against the signs and products of it? Is it not because you have yet much

unbelief, and judge of God's love as the flesh directeth you, instead of judging by the effects and prognostics which he himself hath bid you judge by? We will grant to the flesh, that no chastisement for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; if you will believe the Spirit that, nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby; and that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." (Heb. xii. 6, 11.) Misunderstand not, then, the prognostics of your present sorrows. Think how they will work as well as how they taste. They bode good, though they are unpleasant. If you were bastards and reprobates you might feel less of the rod. When the ploughers make furrows on you, it prepareth you for the seed; and the showers that water it prognosticate a plenteous harvest. Think it not strange if he thresh and grind you, if you would be bread for your Master's use. He is not drowning his sheep when he washeth them, nor killing them when he is shearing them. But by this he showeth that they are his own: and the new-shorn sheep do most visibly bear his name or mark; when it is almost worn out, and scarce discernible, on them that have the longest fleece. If you love the world and prosperity best, rejoice most in it, and grieve most for the want of it. But if you love God best, and take him for your part and treasure, rejoice in him, and in that condition which hath the fullest significations of his love, and grieve most for his displeasure, and for that condition which either signifieth it, or most enticeth you to displease him. (2 Cor. iv. 18; Matt. vi. 20, 21.) If things present be your portion, then seek them first, and rejoice in them, and mourn when they are taken from you. (Col. iii. 1—4.) But if really your portion be above with Christ, let your hearts be there; and let your joys and sorrows and endeavours signify it. The sense of brutes doth judge of pain and pleasure only by their present feeling; but the reason of a man, and the faith of a Christian, do estimate them according to their signification and importance. I know that it is in vain to think by reason to reconcile the flesh and sense unto its sufferings: but if I may speak to you as to men, much more if as to Christians, and reason with your reasonable part, I shall not at all despair of the success.

Quest. 1. Tell me, then, who it is that you suffer by; that hath the principal disposing hand in all? Is it one that you can reasonably suspect of any want of power, wisdom, or good-

ness? Is he not much fitter to dispose of you, than you or any mortals are? If the physician be better than the patient, to determine how he shall be ordered, and if you are fitter than your infant child, and if you are fitter than your beast, to determine of his pasture, work, and usage, sure then you will grant, that God is much more fit than we. And if he would give you your choice and say, 'It shall go with thee all thy days, for prosperity or adversity, life or death, as thou wilt thyself, or as thy dearest friend will;' you should say, 'Nay, Lord, but let it be as thou wilt; for I and my friend are foolish and partial, and know not what is best for ourselves. Not our wills, but thy will be done.'

Quest. 2. Do you not see that carnal pleasure is far more dangerous than all your sorrows? Look on the ungodly that prosper in the world, and tell me whether you would be in their condition? If not, why do you long for their temptations; and to live in that air whose corruption causeth such epidemical mortalities? If you would not with the rich man, (Luke xvi.) be damned for sensuality, nor with the fool, (Luke xii. 19, 20,) say, Soul, take thy ease, &c. when your souls are presently to be taken from you; or with him, (Luke xviii. 22, 23,) go away sorrowful from Christ; desire not the temptations which brought them to it. If you would not oppress the people of God with Pharaoh, nor persecute the prophets with Ahab and Jezebel, nor resist the gospel, and persecute the preachers of it with the Scribes and Pharisees; (2 Thess. xiv. 15, 16;) desire not the temptations which led them to all this.

Quest. 3. Would not you follow your Saviour, and rather be conformed to him and to his saints, than to the wicked that have their portion in this life? I doubt you do not well study the life and sufferings of Christ, and the reason of them; when you find yourselves so little concerned in them, and so desirous of another way. And would you not go to heaven in the common way that the saints of old have gone before you in? Read the Scripture and all church history, and observe which is the beaten path of life; and whether even among believers and the pastors of the church, it was the persecuted or the prosperous that most honoured their profession, and which of them it was that corrupted the church with pride and domination, and kindled in it those flames of contention which are consuming it to this day; and sowed those seeds of divisions whose sour fruit have set their children's teeth on edge. Mark whether it was

the suffering or the prospering part that hath had the greatest hand in her after-sufferings.

Quest. 4. What saith your own experience, and how hath God dealt with you in the time that is past? Hath not your suffering done you good? If it have not, you may thank yourselves: for I am sure God's rod hath a healing virtue, and others have received a cure by it. How much is mankind beholden to the cross! When David went weeping up mount Olivet, he was in a safer case than when he was gazing on Bathsheba from his battlements. And when Christ was sweating blood upon mount Olivet, (Luke xxii. 44,) it was a sign that man's redemption was in hand: and when he was bleeding on the cross, and drinking vinegar and gall, it was almost finished. And if the cross hath borne such happy fruit, what reason have we to be so much against it? If it have proved good for you that you were afflicted, and no part of your lives have been more fruitful, why should your desires so much contradict your own experience? If bitter things have proved the most wholesome, and a full and luscious diet hath caused your disease, what need you more, to direct your judgment, if you will judge as men, and not as brutes?

Obj. But (you will say) it is not all sorrow that foretellet joy: some pass from sorrow unto greater sorrow. How then shall we know whether our sorrows tend to worse or unto better?

Answ. It is true that there are sorrows which have no such promise, as these have in the text. As, 1. The mere vindictive punishment of the wicked. 2. The sinful sorrows which men keep up in themselves; proceeding from their sinful love of creatures. 3. And the corrections which are not improved by us to our amendment and reformation.

But the promise belongeth, 1. To those sorrows which in sincerity we undergo for the sake of Christ and righteousness. 2. To those sorrows which we ourselves perform as duties, either for the dishonour of God, or the sins or miseries of others; or our penitential sorrows for our own offences. 3. And to those sorrows of chastisement which we patiently submit to, and improve to a true amendment of our hearts and lives. For though sin be the material cause, or the meritorious cause, yet love which maketh reformation the effect, will also make the end to be our comfort.

Use 2. If this be God's method, condemn not then the gene-

ration of the just, because you see them undermost in the world, and suffer more than other men. Think it not a dishonour to them to be in poverty, prisons, banishment, or reproach, unless it be for a truly dishonourable cause. Call not men miserable, for that which God maketh the token of his love, and the prognostic of their joy. Methinks he that hath once read the Psalms xxxvii. and lxxiii. ; and Matt. v. 10—12 ; and Job xiii. and xv. ; and 2 Thess. i., and well believeth them, should never err this old condemned error any more. And yet it is common among carnal men, to do as some beasts do ; when one of their fellows is wounded, they all forsake him : so these stand looking with pity, or fear, or strangeness upon a man that is under sufferings and slanders, as if it must needs be a deserved thing ; and think it a great dishonour to a man, how innocent soever, when they hear that he is used as offenders and malefactors are ; forgetting how by this they condemn their Saviour, and all his apostles and martyrs, and the wisest, best, and happiest men that the earth hath borne. And all this is but the blind and hasty judgment of sense and unbelief, which hath neither the wit to judge by the word of God, nor yet the patience to stay the end, and see how the sorrows of the godly will conclude, and where the triumph of the hypocrite will leave them.

And yet some there be that are apt to err on the other extreme, and to think that every man is happy that is afflicted, and that such have all their sorrow in this life ; and that the suffering party is always in the right, and therefore they are ready to fall in with any deluded sect, which they see to be under reproach and suffering. But the cause must be first known, before the suffering can be well judged of.

Doct. 2. Christ's death and departure was the cause of his disciples' sorrows.

This is plain in the words " Ye now therefore have sorrow ; but I will see you again." And the causes of this sorrow were these three conjunct : 1. That their dear Lord, whom they loved, and whom they had heard, and followed, and put their trust in, must now be taken from them. If the parting of friends at death do turn our garments into the signs of our sad and mournful hearts, and cause us to dwell in the houses of mourning, we must allow Christ's disciples some such affections, upon their parting with their Lord.

2. And the manner of his death, no doubt, did much increase their sorrows. That the most innocent should suffer as a re-

puted malefactor, that he that more contemned the wealth and pleasures and glory of the world, than ever man did, and chose a poor, inferior life, and would not have a kingdom of this world, and never failed in any duty to high or low, should yet be hanged ignominiously on a cross, as one that was about to usurp the crown! That deluded sinners should put to death the Lord of life, and spit in the face of such a majesty, and hasten destruction to their nation and themselves; and that all Christ's disciples must thus be esteemed the followers of a crucified usurper, judge if we had been in their case ourselves, whether this would have been matter of sorrow to us or not. Had it not been enough for Christ to have suffered the pain, but he must also suffer the dishonour, even the imputation of sin, which no man was so far from being guilty of? and of that particular sin, usurpation of dominion, and treason against Cæsar, which his heart and life were as contrary to, as light to darkness? And was it not enough for Christians to suffer so great calamities of bodies for righteousness' sake, but they must also suffer the reproach of being the seditious followers of a crucified malefactor whom they would have made a king? No! our Lord would stoop to the lowest condition for our sakes, which was consistent with his innocency and perfection! Sin is so much worse than suffering, that we may take this for the greatest part of his condescension, and strangest expression of his love, that he should take not only the nature and the sufferings of a man, but also the nature and the imputation of sinners. Though sin itself was inconsistent with his perfection, yet so was not the false accusation and imputation of it: he could not become a sinner for us; but he could be reputed a sinner for us, and die as such. And when our Lord hath submitted to this most ignominious kind of suffering, it is not fit that we should be the choosers of our sufferings, and say, Lord, we will suffer any thing except the reputation of being offenders, and the false accusations of malicious men! If in this we must be made conformable to our Head, we must not refuse it, nor repine at his disposal of us.

3. And their sorrow for Christ's departure was the greater, because they had so little foresight of his resurrection and return. It is strange to see how dark they were in these articles of the faith, for all their long converse with Christ, and his plain foretelling them his death and resurrection: and how much of their teaching Christ reserved to the Spirit after his departure

from them. "Then took he unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished: for he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and spitefully entreated, and spit upon, and they shall scourge him and put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again." (John xii. 16; Luke xviii. 31—34.) And they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken. Had they known all that would follow, and clearly foreseen his resurrection and his glory, they would then have been troubled the less for his death, but when they saw him die, and foresaw him not revive, and rise, and reign, then did their hearts begin to fail them, and they said, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." (Luke xxiv. 21.) Even as we use to lament immoderately, when we lay the bodies of our friends in the grave, because we see not whither the soul is gone, nor in what triumph and joy it is received unto Christ; which if we saw it would moderate our griefs. And even so we over pity ourselves and our friends in our temporal sufferings, because we see not whither they tend and what will follow them. We see Job on the dunghill, but look not so far as his restoration, "Behold we count them happy which endure: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy." (Jam. v. 11.) There is no judging by the present, but either by staying [for] the end, or believing God's predictions of it.

Use. It is allowable in Christ's disciples to grieve (in faith and moderately) for any departure of his from them; they that have had the comfort of communion with him in a life of faith and grace, must needs lament any loss of that communion; it is sad with such a soul, when Christ seemeth strange, or when they pray and seek, and seem not to be heard! It is sad with a believer when he must say, 'I had once access to the Father by the Son; I had helps in prayer, and I had the lively operations of the Spirit of grace, and some of the joy of the Holy Ghost, but now, alas, it is not so.' And they that have had experience of the fruit and comfort of his word, and ordinances, and discipline, and the communion of saints, may be allowed to lament the loss of this, if he take it from them. It was no unseemly thing in David, when he was driven from the tabernacle of God, to make that lamentation, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks,

so panteth my soul after thee, O God; my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? O my God, my soul is cast down within me," &c. (Psalm xlii. and xliii.) And, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God; yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest," &c. "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand; I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." (Psalm lxxxiv. 2—4.) It signifieth ill when men can easily let Christ go, or lose his word, or helps, and ordinances. When sin provoketh him to hide his face, and withdraw his mercies, if we can senselessly let them go, it is a contempt which provoketh him much more. If we are indifferent what he giveth us, it is just with him to be indifferent too, and to set as little by our helps and happiness, as we set by them ourselves. But we little know the misery which such contempt prepareth for: "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee, lest I make thee desolate; a land not inhabited." (Jer. vi. 8.) "Yea, wo also unto them when I depart from them." (Hos. ix. 12.) When God goeth, all goeth; grace and peace, help and hope, and all that is good and comfortable is gone, when God is gone. Wonder not, therefore, if holy souls cry after God, and fear the loss of his grace and ordinances; and if they lament the loss of that, which dead-hearted sensualists are weary of, (Luke viii. 47,) and would drive away; it will be the damning sentence, (Matt. xxv. 41,) "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity." (Matt. vii. 23.) And, therefore, all that is but like it, is terrible to them that have any regard of God, or their salvation. (Luke xiii. 27.)

Doct. 3. The sorrows of Christ's disciples are but short. It is but now that they have sorrow: and how quickly will this now be gone!

Reas. 1. Life itself is but short, and, therefore, the sorrows of this life are but short. Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble; he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. (Job xiv. 1, 2.) Though our days are evil, they are but few. (Gen. xlvi. 9.) As our time maketh haste, and posteth away, so also do our sorrows, which will attain their period together with our

lives. As the pleasure of sin, so the sufferings of the godly, are but for a season. (Heb. xi. 26.) "Now, for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." (1 Pet. i. 6.) The pleasures and the pains of so short a life, are but like a pleasant or a frightful dream; how quickly shall we awake, and all is vanished. If we lived as long as they did before the flood, then worldly interest, prosperity, and adversity, would be of greater signification to us, and yet they should seem nothing in comparison of eternity: for where now are all the fleshly pains or pleasures of Adam or Methuselah? Much more are they inconsiderable in so short a life as one of ours. Happy is the man whose sorrows are of no longer continuance than this short and transitory life!

Reas. 2. God's displeasure with his servants is but short, and, therefore, his corrections are but short. (Psalm xxx. 5.) "His anger endureth but for a moment, but in his favour is life." (Isa. liv. 7, 8.) "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercy will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." (Isa. xxvi. 20.) "Come, my people, enter into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." Thus even in judgment doth he remember mercy, and consumeth us not, because his compassions fail not. (Lam. iii.) "He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger for ever; for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." (Psalm ciii. 9, 14.) His short corrections are purposely fitted to prepare us for endless consolations.

Reas. 3. Our trial also must be but short, and, therefore, so must be our sorrows. Though God will not have us receive the crown, without the preparation of a conflict and a conquest, yet will he not have our fight and race too long, lest it overmatch our strength, and his grace, and we should be overcome. Though our faith and we must be tried in the fire, yet God will see that the furnace be not over hot, and that we stay no longer, but till our dross be separated from us. (1 Pet. i. 6, 7, 9.) God putteth us not into the fire to consume us, but to refine us, (Psalm cxix. 67, 75,) that when we come out we may say, (Psalm cxxix. 1—3,) "It is good for us that we were afflicted," (Psalm cxix. 71; Isaiah xlix. 13,) and then he will save the afflicted people. (Psalm xviii. 27.)

Reas. 4. The power of those that afflict God's servants wrongfully, is but short ; and therefore, the sorrows of such affliction can be but short ; though it be foreign churches of whom I speak, I hope it is to such as take their case to be to them as their own : while they are breathing out threatenings, they are ready to breathe out their guilty souls. If a man in a dropsy or consumption persecute us, we would not be over fearful of him, because we see he is a dying man. And so little is the distance between the death of one man and another, that we may well say, ' All men's lives are in a consumption, and may bear their indignation, as we would do the injuries of a dying man. How short is the day of the power of darkness. Christ calleth it but an hour ; " This is your hour, and the power of darkness." (Luke xxii. 53.) How quickly was Herod eaten of worms, and many another cut off in the height of their prosperity, when they have been raging in the heat of persecution. Little thought Ahab that he had been so near his woful day, when he had given order that Micaiah should be fed with the bread and water of affliction, till he returned in peace. What persecutions have the death of a Licinius, a Julian, a queen Mary, &c., shortened ? While they are raging they are dying ; while they are condemning the just, they are going to be condemned by their most just avenger. How quickly will their corpse be laid in dust, and their condemned souls be put under the chains of darkness, till the judgment of the great and dreadful day ? (2 Pet. xxiv.) He is not only an unbeliever, but irrational or inconsiderate, that cannot see their end, (Jude 6,) in the greatest of their glory. How easy is it to see these bubbles vanishing, and to foresee the sad and speedy period of all their cruelties and triumphs ? " Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment ? Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds, yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung. They which have seen him, shall say, Where is he ? He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found ; yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night. The eye also which saw him, shall see him no more, neither shall his place behold him." (Job xx. 4—9.) Though pride do compass them about as a chain, and violence cover them as a garment, and they are corrupt, and speak oppression, or calumny, wickedly, they speak loftily, or from on high. Though they set their mouth against the heavens, and

their tongue walketh through the earth, yet surely they are set in slippery places. God doth cast them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment? They are utterly consumed with terrors; as a dream* from one that awaketh, so, O Lord, in awaking, (or raising up, that is, saith the Chaldee paraphrase, in thy day of judging, or as all the other translations, *in civitate tua*, in thy kingdom or government,) thou shalt despise their image, that is, show them and all the world how despicable that image of greatness, and power, and felicity was which they were so proud of. If such a bubble † of vain-glory, such an image of felicity, such a dream of power and greatness be all that the church of God hath to be afraid of, it may well be said, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils." ‡ (Isa. ii. 22.) "For wherein is he to be accounted of." (Psalm cxlvi. 4.) His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish. And, "Behold the Lord God will help me, who is he that shall condemn me? Lo, they all shall wax old as a garment, the moth shall eat them up." (Isa. l. 9.) And, "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law. Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings, for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wood, but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation." (Isa. li. 7, 8.) The sorrows which so short-lived power can inflict, can be but short. You read of their victories and persecutions in the news-books one year, and quickly after of their death.

Use. Hence, therefore, you may learn how injudicious they are, that think religion is disparaged by such short and small afflictions of believers, and how unexcusable they are who yield unto temptation, and venture upon sin, and comply with the ungodly, and forsake the truth, through the fear of so short and momentary sorrows, when there is none of them but would endure the prick of a pin, or the scratch of a briar, or the biting of a flea to gain a kingdom, or the opening of a vein, or

* Or as Amyraldus Paraphras., "Cum olim evigilabunt, præsens eorum felicitas erit instar somnii, quod somno discusso dissipatum est: quin etiam antequam evigilent, in ipsa illa urbe in qua antea florebant vanam istam felicitatis pompam, in qua antea volitabant, reddes contemnendam, tanquam umbram aut imaginem evanescentem; in qua nihil solidi est."

† "Nubecula est cito evanescit," said Athanasius of Julian.

‡ When Julian's death was told at Antioch, they all cried out, "Maxime fatue! ubi sunt vaticinia tua? Vicit Deus et Christus ejus." Abbas Uspargens. page 91.

the griping of a purge to save their lives. Oh! how deservedly are ungodly men forsaken of God, for how short a pleasure do they forsake him, and the everlasting pleasures. And how short a trouble do they avoid by running into everlasting trouble. If sin had not first subdued reason, men would never make it a matter of question, whether to escape so small a suffering, they should break the laws of the most righteous God, nor would they once put so short a pain or pleasure into the balance against the endless pain and pleasure. Nor would a temptation bring them to deliberate on a matter, which should be past deliberation with a man that is in his wits. And yet, alas! how much do these short concerns prevail through all the world! Unbelievers are short-sighted, they look only or chiefly to things near and present. A lease of this empty world for a few years, yea, an uncertain tenure of it, is preferred before the best security for eternal life. Its present pleasures which they must have, and its present sorrows which they take care to escape. As Christ hath taught us to say about these worldly things, so the devil hath taught them to say about everlasting things, "Care not for to-morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself; sufficient to the day is the evil thereof." (Matt. vi. 34.) Therefore when the day of their calamity shall come, a despairing conscience will perpetually torment them, and say, 'This is but the sorrow which thou chooseth to endure, or the misery which thou wouldest venture on, to escape a present, inconsiderable pain.'

If there be any of you that shall think that present sufferings are considerable things, to be put into the scales against eternity, or that are tempted to murmuring and impatience under such short afflictions, I desire them but to consider, 1. That your suffering will be no longer than your sin. And if it endure but as long, is it any matter of wonder or repining? Can you expect to keep your sickness, and yet to be wholly freed from the pain? Can sin and suffering be perfectly separated? Do you think to continue ignorant and proud, and selfish, and in so much remaining unbelief, carnality, worldliness, and sloth, and yet never to feel the rod or spur, nor suffer any more than if you had been innocent? Deceive not yourselves, it will not be. (Gen. iv. 7.) Sin lieth at the door, and be sure at last it will find you out. (Numb. xxxii. 23.) "Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, much more the ungodly and the sinner." (Prov. xi. 31.) "Judgment must begin at the house of God, and

the righteous are saved with much ado." (1 Pet. iv. 17, 18.) God is not reconciled to the sins of any man, and as he will show by his dealings that he is reconciled to their persons, so will he show that he is not reconciled to their sins. If God continue your sufferings any longer than you continue your sin, and if you can truly say, 'I am afflicted though I am innocent,' then your impatience may have some excuse.

2. Your sorrows shall be no longer than you make them necessary, and will you grudge at your own benefit? Or at the trouble of your physic while you continue your disease? It is but "if need be that now for a season ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." (1 Peter i. 6.) And who maketh the need? Is it God or you? Who maketh you dull, and slothful, and sensual? Who turneth your hearts to earthly things, and deprives you of the sweetness of things spiritual and heavenly? Who maketh you proud, and unbelieving, and uncharitable? Is it he that doth this, that causeth the need of your afflictions, and is to be blamed for the bitterness of them? but it is your physician that is to be thanked and praised for fitting them so wisely to your cure.

3. Your sorrows shall not be so long as you deserve. It is strange ingratitude, for that man to grudge at a short affliction that is saved from everlasting misery, and confesseth he hath deserved the pains of hell. Confess with thankfulness, that "it is his mercy that you are not consumed and condemned, because his compassions fail not. If God be your portion, hope in him; for the Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that you both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord; it is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth; he sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him; he putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him, he is filled full with reproach; for the Lord will not cast off for ever, but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies. (Lam. iii. 22—33.) All that is come upon us is for our evil deeds, and for our great trespasses, and God hath punished us less than our iniquities. (Ezr. ix. 13.)

4. Your sorrows shall not be so long as the sorrows of the ungodly, nor as those that you must endure, if you will choose sin to escape these present sorrows. Abel's sorrow is not so long as Cain's; nor Peter's or Paul's so long as Judas's. If the

offering of a more acceptable sacrifice do cost a righteous man his life, alas, what is that to the punishment that malignant, envious Cainites, or treacherous Judases must endure. What is the worst that man can do, or the most that God will here inflict, to the reprobates, endless, hellish torments? Oh, had you seen what they endure, or had you felt those pains but a day or hour, I can hardly think that you would ever after make so great a matter of the sufferings of a Christian here for Christ, or that you would fear such sufferings more than hell. It is disingenuous to repine at so gentle a rod, at the same time whilst millions are in the flames of hell, and when these sufferings tend to keep you thence.

5. Your sorrows shall not be so long as your following joys, if you be persevering, conquering believers. What is a sickness, or a scorn, or a prison, or banishment, or shame, or death, when it must end in the endless joys of heaven. Oh, do but believe these with a lively, sound, effectual faith, and you will make light of all the sufferings in the way, "Nihil crux sentit in nervo," saith Tertullian, "cum animus est in cœlo." (Heb. xi. 25, 26, &c.) The mind that is in heaven, and seeth him that is invisible, will easily bear the body's pains. Mistake not in your accounts, and you will reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Rom. viii. 18.) "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, doth work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.)

Use 2. And if it be but for a now that you must have sorrows, how reasonable is it that those sorrows be moderated and mixed with joy? And how just are those commands, "Rejoice evermore." "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." (1 Thess. v. 16; Matt. v. 10—12.) "Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation." (Rom. xii. 12.) How rational was their joy, who being beaten and forbidden to preach, "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ." (Acts v. 42.) "Rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers in Christ's sufferings. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part

he is glorified." (1 Pet. iv. 13, 14.) It is a shame to be dejected under a short and tolerable pain, which is so near to the eternal pleasure, and to suffer as if we believed not the end, and so to sorrow as men that are without hope.

Doct. 4. Christ will again visit his sorrowful disciples. He removeth not from them with an intent to cast them off. When he hideth his face, he meaneth not to forsake them; when he taketh away any ordinances or mercies, he doth not give them a bill of divorce. When he seemeth to yield to the powers of darkness, he is not overcome, nor will he give up his kingdom or interest in the world. When he letteth the boar into his vineyard, it is not to make it utterly desolate, or turn it common to the barren wilderness: for,

1. He hath conquered the greatest enemies already, and, therefore, there remaineth none to conquer him. He hath triumphed over Satan, death, and hell; he hath conquered sin, and what is there left to depose him from his dominion?

2. He retaineth still his relation to his servants; whether he be corporally present or absent, he knoweth his own, and it is their care also that whether present or absent, they may be accepted of him. (2 Cor. v. 7—9.) He is their head while they are suffering on earth; and, therefore, he feelth their sufferings and infirmities. (Heb. iv. 15.) And hence it is that he thus rebuketh a persecuting zealot, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts ix. 4.)

3. He hath not laid by the least measure of his love; he loveth us in heaven as much as he did on earth: "Having loved his own which were in the world, to the end he loved them." (John xiii. 1.) And as Joseph's love could not long permit him to conceal himself from his brethren, but broke out the more violently after a short restraint, so that he fell on their necks and wept; so will not the more tender love of Christ permit him long to hide his face, or estrange himself from the people of his love, and when he returneth, it will be with redoubled expressions of endearment.

4. His covenant with his servants is still in force; his promises are sure, and shall never be broken, though the performance be not so speedy as we desire. "Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations; and repayeth them that hate him to their face to destroy them; he will not be slack

to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face." (Deut. vii. 9.) "He keepeth covenant and mercy with his servants that walk before him with all their heart." (1 Kings viii. 23 ; Dan. ix. 4 ; Neh. i. 5, and ix. 32.) And it is the promise of Christ when he departed from his servants, that "He will come again and take them to himself, that where he is, there they may be also. (John xiv. 3, and xii. 26.)

5. His own interest, and honour, and office, and preparations, do engage him to return to his disconsolate flock ; his jewels and peculiar treasure are his interest. (Mal. iii. 17 ; 1 Peter ii. 9 ; Exodus xix. 5.) He that hath chosen but a little flock, (Luke xii. 32,) and confineth his interest and treasure into such a narrow compass, will not forsake that little flock, but secure them to his kingdom. He that hath made it his office to redeem and save them, and hath so dearly bought them, and gone so far in the work of their salvation, will lose none of all his cost and preparations ; but for his people, and his blood, and his honour, and his Father's will, and love, will certainly finish what he hath undertaken. And, therefore, his withdrawals shall not be everlasting.

6. It is for their sakes that he withdraweth for a time ; though the bitter part be for their sin, it is intended as medicinal for their benefit ; sometimes he doth it to awake and humble them, and stir them up to seek him, and call after him ; to show them what they have done in provoking him to withdraw and hide his face, that renewed repentance may prepare them for the comforts of his return. Sometimes he hath such work for them to do, which is not so agreeable to his presence ; as fasting, and mourning, and confessing him in sufferings. (Matt. ix. 15.) And sometimes he hath comforts of another kind to give them in his seeming absence. "I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him to you." (John xvi. 7.) As there were comforts which the disciples were fittest for in Christ's bodily absence, so when he will take away his ordinances, or our prosperity or friends, there are comforts of another sort, in secret communion with him, and in suffering for him, which his people may expect ; not that any can expect it, who on that pretence do reject these ordinances and mercies no more than the disciples could have expected the Comforter, if they had rejected the corporal presence of Christ ; but God hath such supplies for those that mourn for his departure.

Use 1. Misunderstand not then the departings of your Lord. It is too bad to say with the evil servant, "My Lord delayeth his coming;" and worse to say he will never return. 1. He will return at his appointed day to judge the world; to justify his saints, whom the world condemned; to answer the desires, and satisfy all the expectations of believers; and to comfort, and everlastingly reward the faithful that have patiently waited his return. And when he returneth with salvation, then shall we also return from our calamities, and shall discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that served God, and him that served him not. (Mal. iii. 18.) Undoubtedly our "Redeemer liveth, and shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though, after our skin, worms devour these bodies, yet in our flesh we shall see God. (Job xix. 25, 26.) "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." (Rev. i. 7.) 'Though unbelieving scoffers, shall say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Pet. iii. 4.) Yet believers consider, "That a day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years but as a day; and that the Lord is not slack of his promise, but long-suffering." (Ver. 8, 9.) "He will not leave us comfortless, but will come unto us." (John xiv. 18.) "The patient expectation of the just shall not be forgotten, nor in vain. (Psalm ix. 7, 8.) "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe in that day." (2 Thess. i. 6—10.)

2. And he will return also to the seemingly forsaken flocks of his disciples; he hath his times of trial, when the shepherds being smitten, the sheep are scattered; and he hath his times of gathering the scattered ones again together, and "giving them pastors after his own heart, that shall feed them with knowledge and understanding." (Jer. iii. 14, 15.) And shall say, "What is the chaff unto the wheat." (Jer. xxiii. 28.) When we cry, "Wo is me for my hurt; my wound is grievous!" We must also say, "Truly this is a grief, and I must bear it; my

tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken; my children are gone forth of me, and they are not; there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains; for the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the Lord. O Lord correct me, but with judgment, not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing." (Jer. x. 19—21, 24.) "Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness: and being desolate it mourneth to me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart." (Jer. xii. 10, 11.) "But wo be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture, saith the Lord. Therefore, thus saith the Lord, against the pastors that feed my people; ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them; behold I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, and I will gather the remnant of my flock. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord." (Ezek. xxxiv.) "Wo to the shepherds of Israel that feed themselves; should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the flocks. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. Thus saith the Lord, Behold I am against the shepherds, and I will require my flock at their hands, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth. Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And as for you, O my flock, Behold I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he-goats. Is it a small thing to you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drank of the deep waters, but you must foul the residue with your feet? And as for my flock, they eat that which you have trodden with your feet, and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God unto them; Behold I, even I will judge between the fat cattle and the lean? Because ye have

thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad," &c. Read the rest. Particular churches may be scattered to dissolution, but none of the faithful members.

3. And Christ hath his returning time, to the souls of his servants which seem to be forsaken by him: "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." (Psalm xxx. 5.) When he seemeth their "enemy, and writeth bitter things against them, he is their surest friend, and will justify them himself from their accusers. Though they may be troubled when they remember God, and their spirit be overwhelmed in them, and their souls refuse to be comforted, and say, Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Yet must we rebuke this unbelief, and say, This is my infirmity; I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate of thy works, and talk of thy doings." (Psalm lxxvii.) The long night that hath no day, the long winter that hath no summer is the reward of the ungodly; but light ariseth to the righteous in his darkness, and "joy to them that are upright in heart." (Psalm xcii. 4.) Light is sown for them, and in season will spring up. (Psalm xcvi. 11.) The righteousness which was hid from the world by false accusations, and from ourselves by the terrors and mistakes of darkness, will God "bring forth as light, and our judgment as the noon-day." (Psalm xxxvii. 6.) Our eclipse will vanish when the sun returneth, and our sins no longer interpose: and though all our inquiries and complainings have not brought us out of the dark, yet "God is the Lord who showeth us light;" (Psalm cxviii. 27;) "and in his light we shall see light." (Psalm xxxvi. 9.) Say then, O distrustful, trembling Christian, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul! and why art thou thus disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God." (Psalm xlii. 5, 11, and xliii. 5.) Though now you "go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy, God will send out his light and truth, and they shall lead you, and bring you to his holy hill and tabernacle: and then you shall go with praise to the altar of God, even of God your exceeding joy." (Psalm xlii. 2—4.)

Use 2. Learn, then, how to behave yourselves in the absence

of your Lord, till his return. If you ask me how;—Answer 1. Be not content and pleased with his absence. You must bear it, but not desire it. Else you are either enemies, or children that have run themselves into such guilt and fears, that they take their father for their enemy. 2. Nay, be not too indifferent and insensible of your Lord's departure. Love is not regardless of the company of our beloved. He may well take it ill, when you can let him go, and be as merry without him, as if his absence were no loss to you. If you care no more for him, he will make you care, before you shall feel the comforts of his presence. Such contempt is the way to a worse forsaking: call after him till he return, if he hide his face. 3. Turn not aside to the creature for content, and seek not to make up the loss of his presence with any of the deceitful comforts of the world. Let him not see you take another in his stead, as if riches, or power, or worldly friends, or fleshly pleasure, would serve your turn instead of Christ. If once you come to this, he may justly leave you to your vain contents, and let them serve your turn as long as they can, and see how well they will supply his room. Oh, see that no idol be admitted into his place till Christ return. 4. Be not emboldened, by his absence, to sin. Say not as the evil servant, in your hearts, 'My Lord delayeth his coming,' and so begin to smite your fellow-servants, and to eat, and drink with the drunken, lest your "Lord come in a day when you look not for him, and cut you asunder, and appoint your portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xxiv. 48—51.) Because Christ cometh not to judge the wicked as soon as they have sinned, they are emboldened to sin more fearlessly; and because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil." (Eccles. viii. 11.) But, "behold the Judge is at the door." (James v. 9.) "He that cometh will not tarry; and for all these things you must come to judgment." (Eccles. xi. 9, and xii. 14.) 5. Be not discouraged by your Lord's delay, but wait his coming in faith and patience. Can you not wait for him so short a time? Oh! how quickly will it be accomplished. Sink not into despondency of mind. Be not dismayed in the duties or sufferings to which you are called. "Lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed." (Heb. xii. 12, 13.) "Be steadfast, unmoveable,

always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord." (1 Cor. xv. 58.) "Be sober, and hope unto the end." (1 Pet. i. 13.) "Ye are the house of Christ, if ye hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." (Heb. iii. 6, 14, and vi. 11. "Ye have need of patience, that having done the will of God, ye may inherit the promise." (Heb. x. 36, 11.)

Doct. 5. "When Christ shall again appear to his disciples, their sorrows shall be turned into joy: when Christ returneth, joy returneth," saith David. (Psal. xxx. 7.) "Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled." But (v. 11, 12) "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent: O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever." When the sun ariseth it is day, and its approach dispelleth the winter frosts, and reviveth the almost dying creatures, and calleth up the life which was hidden in the seed, or retired unto the root, after a sharp and spending winter. How quickly doth the sun's return recover the verdure and beauty of the earth, and clothe it in green, and spangle it with the ornaments of odoriferous flowers, and enrich it with sweet and plenteous fruits: the birds that were either hid or silent, appear and sing, and the face of all things is changed into joy. So is it with the poor deserted soul, upon the return of Christ; unbelieving doubts and fears then vanish: the garments of sadness are laid aside, and those of gladness are put on: the language of distrust and despairing lamentations are first turned into words of peace, and then into joyful thankfulness and praise. The soul that was skilled in no spiritual discourse, but complaining of a dead and frozen heart, of dull and cold and lifeless duties, is now taken up in the rehearsals of the works of infinite love, and searching into the mysteries of redemption, and reciting the great and precious promises, and magnifying the name and grace of its Redeemer, and expatiating in the praises of the everlasting kingdom, the heavenly glory, the blessed society, and especially of the Lamb, and of the eternal God. You would not think that this is the same person, that lately could scarce think well of God, or that dwelt in tears, and dust, and darkness, and could think of nothing but sin and hell, and from every text and every providence, concluded nothing, but undone, or damned: would you think this joyful, thankful soul, were the same that lately was crying

on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" that could find nothing written on the tables of his heart, but forsaken, miserable, and undone; that daily cried out, 'It is too late, there is no hope, I had a day of grace, but it is past and gone.' When Christ returneth, and causeth his face to shine upon them, all this is turned into 'Praise and honour and glory unto the Lamb, and to the almighty and most holy God, that liveth for ever, and is the everlasting joy and portion of his saints.' And sooner or later, thus will it be with all the upright, that wait on God in the day of trial, and deal not falsely in his covenant. The Son who was brought up with the Father, and was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing also in the habitable parts of the earth, whose delights were with the sons of men, doth bless the children of wisdom with a participation of his delights; for "blessed are they that keep his ways."—"Blessed is the man that heareth him, watching daily at his gates, waiting at the posts of his doors: for he that findeth him findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord." (Prov. viii. 30—36.) Though Christ had left his disciples so lately under fears and trouble, guilty of deserting him, and seemingly now deserted by him, yet early on the third day, he ariseth for their consolation, and presently sendeth them these joyful words, in the first speech he uttereth, and that by a woman that had been sorrowful and a sinner, "Go to my brethen, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." (John xx. 17.) Those that his ministers have long been comforting in vain, when Christ returneth he will revive and comfort them in a moment, and with a word. The soul that now crieth 'Oh, it is impossible, it will never be,' doth little know how easy it is with Christ. It is but saying, "Lazarus, arise:" or, "Let there be light," and there will be life and light immediately at his command.

2. And so when he restoreth his ordinances and order to a forsaken church, and restoreth their holy opportunities and advantages of grace, what gladness and praising their Redeemer will there be? As it was with the churches upon the death of Julian, and after the heathen and the Arian persecutions, in the happy reign of Constantine, Theodosius, Marcian, &c. How joyfully did the English exiles return to worship God in their native land, upon the death of queen Mary; and see the fall of Bonner and Gardiner, that had sacrificed so many holy Christ-

ians in the flames ! How gladly did they grow in the soil that was manured with the blood and ashes of their faithful brethren, and reap the fruit of their fortitude and sufferings ! When Christ whipped the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and would not let them make the house of prayer a place of merchandise, what hosannahs were sounded in Jerusalem. (Matt. xxi. 15, 16.) "When the salvation of Israel cometh out of Zion, and the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad." (Psal. xiv. 7.) "Blessed are they that dwell in his house, for they will be still praising him. For a day in his courts is better than a thousand." (Psal. lxxxiv. 4, 10.) "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound ; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance ; in thy namè shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted : for the Lord is our defence, and the Holy One of Israel is our king." (Psal. lxxxix. 15—18.) What gladness was there at a private meeting of a few Christians that met to pray for Peter, when they saw him delivered and come among them. (Acts xii. 12, and v. 14.) When the churches had rest, they were edified, and walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. (Acts ix. 31.)

3. But the great joy will be when Christ returneth in his glory at the last day. What a multitude of sorrows will there be ended ! And what a multitude of souls will then be comforted ! What a multitude of desires and prayers, and expectations will then be answered ! How many thousand that have sowed in tears, shall then reap in everlasting joy ! When the creature shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. (Rom. viii. 26, 27.) When all the faith and labour, and patience of all the saints from the beginning of the world, shall be rewarded with the rivers of celestial pleasure, and the just shall enter into their Master's joy. (Matt. xxv. 21.)

That you may the better understand the sweetness of all these sorts of joy, which Christ's return will bring to saints, observe these following ingredients in them.

1. It is Christ himself that is the object of their joy : he that is the dearly beloved of their souls ; that for their sakes was made a man of sorrows ; it is he who is their hope and help : with whom they are in covenant as their only Saviour ; in whom they have trusted, with whom they have deponed their

souls! If he should fail them, all would fail them; and they were of all men most miserable: they would be comfortless if he should not come unto them, and were not their comfort. The world cannot help and comfort them, for it is empty, vain, a transient shadow: it will not, for it is malignant, and our professed enemy. For we know that we are of God, and the whole world is *in maligno positus*, set on wickedness (or as some think, because δ *πονηρός* is put for the devil in the foregoing verse, and the article here also used,) is as it were planted into the devil, or put under the devil, to war against Christ and the holy seed: and indeed Satan seemeth in this war against the church, to have somewhat like success as he had against Christ himself: as Christ must be a man of sorrows and scorn, and be crucified as a blasphemer and a traitor, before he rejoice the hearts of his disciples by his resurrection, so the church was a persecuted, scorned handful of men, for the first three hundred years, and then it rose by christian emperors to some reputation, till Satan by another game overcame them by Judas his successors; that for 'what will you give me' by pride and worldliness betrayed them into that deplorable state, in which they have continued these 900 years at least: so that the christian name is confined to a sixth part of the world; and serious sanctified believers are persecuted more by the hypocrites that wear the livery of Christ, than by heathens and infidels themselves. And when the church is so low, almost like Christ on the cross and the grave, will not a resurrection be a joyful change? When it crieth out on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" will not Christ appearing for its deliverance be a welcome sight?

It was when Adam had brought a curse on himself and his posterity, and all the earth, that redemption by the holy seed was promised; and when Satan had conquered man, that Christ was promised to conquer him. It was when the world was destroyed by the deluge that its reparation was promised to Noah: it was when Abraham was a sojourner in a strange land, that the peculiar promises were made to him and his seed. It was when the Israelites were enslaved to extremity, that they were delivered. And it was when the sceptre was departing from Judah, and they and the world were gone from God, that Christ the light of the world was sent. And when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? When we see how vast the heathen and infidel kingdoms are, and what a poor

despised people those are that set their chief hopes on heaven, and how Satan seemeth every where to prevail against them, and most by false and worldly Christians, what a trial is this to our faith and hope? As the disciples said of a crucified Christ, we trusted it had been he that should have redeemed Israel; we are almost ready in the hour of temptation to say, we trusted that God's name should have been hallowed, and his kingdom come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven? And oh, how seasonable, and how joyful will the church's resurrection be after such low and sad distress? Many a sad Christian under the sentence of death, is going hence with fear and trouble: when a moment shall transmit them into the joyful presence of their Lord, and the possession of that which with weakness and fear they did but believe.

2. And Christ will not come or be alone: with him will come the New Jerusalem: he will put glory on each member, but much more on the whole. Oh, how many of our old companions are now there! Not under temptation, or any of the tempter's power! Not under the darkness of ignorance, error, or unbelief! Not under the pains of a languid, diseased, corruptible body! Not under the fear of sin, or Satan, or wicked men: not under the terror of death or hell, of an accusing conscience, or the wrath of God: oh, with what joy shall we see and enjoy that glorious society! To be translated thither from such a world as this, from such temptations, sins, such fears and sorrows, such perfidious malignant wickedness, what will it be but to be taken as from a gaol unto a kingdom, and from the suburbs of hell unto the communion of blessed saints and angels, and into the joy of our Lord.

Doct. 6. Your joy shall no man take from you: the joy that cometh at Christ's return will be a secure and everlasting joy. Impregnable as heaven itself; Christ and his church will be crucified no more. Look not then for Christ and his church in the grave. He is not here; he is risen. Who can we fear will deprive us of that joy?

1. Not ourselves: and then we need to fear no other: our folly and sin is our enemies' strength: they can do nothing against us, without ourselves. The arrows that wound us are all feathered from our own wings. But our trying time will then be past, and confirmation will be the reward of conquest. He that hath kept us in the day of our trial, will keep us in our state of rest and triumph. How the (now) fallen angels came

to lose their first innocency and welfare, is unknown to us : but we have a promise of being for ever with Christ.

2. Nor shall devils deprive us of that joy : neither by those malicious temptations wherewith they now molest and haunt us : not by the unhappy advantages which we have given them by our sin, to corrupt our imaginations and thoughts, and affections, or to disturb our passions, or pervert our understandings. Nor by any terror or violence to molest us.

3. Nor shall any men take from us that joy ; the blessed will increase it : their joy will be ours ; and the wicked will be utterly disabled ; they will be miserable themselves in hell. They will no more endanger us by flattering temptations ; nor terrify us by threats ; nor tread us down by their power ; nor hurt us in their malice ; nor render us odious by false accusations ; nor triumph over us with pride and false reproach. They that said of the church, as of Christ, "He trusted in God, let him deliver him now if he will have him ; for he hath said, I am the Son of God ;" (Matt. xxvii. 43 ;) they shall see that God hath delivered his church, and he will have it.

Use 1. And will not a firm belief of all this rejoice the soul under all disappointments and sufferings on earth ? And doth not our dejectedness and want of joy declare the sinful weakness of our faith ? O sirs, our sadness, our impatience, our small desire to be with Christ, the little comfort that we fetch from heaven do tell us, that Christianity, and a life of faith, is a harder work than most imagine ; and the art and form, and words of holiness are much more common than a holy, heavenly mind and life. Christ speaketh many words of pity to his servants under sorrows and sinking grief, which some mistake for words of approbation or command. "Why are ye afraid, O ye of little faith," were words both of compassion and reproof. I am sure the great unbelief that appeareth in much of our dejectedness and sorrow, deserveth more reproof than our sufferings deserve to be entertained with those sorrows.

Use 2. I will therefore take my farewell of you, in advising, and charging you as from God, that you be not deceived by a flattering world, nor dejected by a frowning world, but place your hopes on those joys which no man can take from you. If you cannot trust the love of God, and the grace and promises of our Saviour, and the witness of the Holy Spirit, you must despair ; for there is no other trust.

So many of you seem to have chosen this good part, the one

thing necessary which shall never be taken from you, that in the midst of our sorrows, I must profess that I part with you with thankfulness and joy. And I will tell you for what I am so thankful, that you may know what I would have you be for the time to come.

I. I thank the Lord, that chose for me so comfortable a station, even a people whom he purposed to bless.

II. I thank the Lord that I have not laboured among you in vain, and that he opened the hearts of so great a number of yours, to receive his word with a teachable and willing mind.

III. I thank the Lord that he hath made so many of you as helpful to your neighbours in your place, as I have been in mine; and that you have not been uncharitable to the souls of others, but have with great success endeavoured the good of all.

IV. I rejoice that God hath kept you humble, that you have not been addicted to proud ostentation of your gifts or wisdom; nor inclined to invade any part of the sacred office, but to serve God in the capacity where he hath placed you.

V. I rejoice that God hath made you unanimous, and kept out sects and heresies, and schisms, so that you have served him as with one mind and mouth; and that you have not been addicted to proud wranglings, disputings, and contentions, but have lived in unity, love and peace, and the practice of known and necessary truths.

VI. I rejoice that your frequent meetings in your houses, spent only in reading, repeating your teacher's sermons, prayer and praise to God, have had none of those effects which the conventicles of proud opiniators and self-conceited persons use to have, and which have brought even needful converse, and godly communication into suspicion at least with some, that argue against duty from the abuse.

Yea, I rejoice that hereby so much good hath been done by you. You have had above forty years' experience of the great benefit of such well ordered christian converse, increasing knowledge, quickening holy desires, prevailing with God, for marvelous, if not miraculous answers of your earnest prayers, keeping out errors and sects.

VII. I am glad that you have had the great encouragement of so many sober, godly, able, peaceable ministers, in all that part of the country round about you, and mostly through that and the neighbour countries: men that avoided vain and bitter

contentions, that engaged themselves in no sects or factions; that of a multitude, not above two that I know of, in all our association, had ever any hand in wars; but their principles and practices were reconciling and pacificatory; they consented to catechize all their parishioners, house by house, and to live in the peaceable practice of so much church discipline, as good Christians of several parties were all agreed in. And you have lived to see what that discipline was, and what were the effects of such agreement.

VIII. I am glad that you were kept from taking the solemn league and covenant, and the engagement, and all consent to the change of the constituted government of this kingdom. I took the covenant myself, of which I repent, and I will tell you why: I never gave it but to one man (that I remember) and he professed himself to be a Papist physician newly turned Protestant, and he came to me to give it him: I was persuaded that he took it in false dissimulation, and it troubled me to think what it was to draw multitudes of men by carnal interest so falsely to take it: and I kept it and the engagement from being taken in your town and country. At first it was not imposed but taken by volunteers: but after that it was made a test of such as were to be trusted or accepted. Besides the illegality, there are two things that cause me to be against it.

1. That men should make a mere dividing engine, and pretend it a means of unity: we all knew at that time when it was imposed, that a great part, if not the greatest, of church and kingdom were of another mind: and that as learned and worthy men were for prelacy, as most the world had (such as Usher, Morton, Hall, Davenant, Brownrig, &c.) And to make our terms of union to be such, as should exclude so many and such men, was but to imitate those church dividers and persecutors, who in many countries and ages, have still made their own impositions the engines of division, by pretence of union. And it seemeth to accuse Christ, as if he had not sufficiently made us terms of concord, but we must devise our own forms as necessary thereto.

2. And it was an imposing on the providence of God, to tie ourselves by vows to that as unchangeable, which we knew not but God might after change, as if we had been the masters of his providence. No man then knew but that God might so alter many circumstances, as might make some things sins, that were then taken for duty; and some things to be duty, which

then passed for sin. And when such changes come, we that should have been content with God's obligations, do find ourselves ensnared in our own rash vows.

And I wish that it teach no other men the way of dividing impositions, either to cut the knot, or to be even with the covenanters.

IX. I greatly rejoice, that family religion is so conscientiously kept up among you, that your children and apprentices, seem to promise us a hopeful continuation of piety among you.

X. And I thank God, that so great a number of persons, eminent for holiness, temperance, humility and charity, are safely got to heaven already, since I first came among you, and being escaped from the temptations and troubles of this present evil world, have left you the remembrance of their most imitable examples.

And having all this comfort in you, as to what is past, I shall once more leave you some of my counsels and requests, for the time to come, which I earnestly intreat you not to neglect.

I. Spend most of your studies in confirming your belief of the truth of the gospel, the immortality of the soul, and the life to come, and in exercising that belief, and laying up your treasure in heaven; and see that you content not yourselves in talking of heaven, and speaking for it; but that your hopes, your hearts, and your conversation be there; and that you live for it, as worldlings do for the flesh.

II. Flatter not yourselves with the hopes of long life on earth, but make it the sum of all your religion, care, and business, to be ready for a safe and comfortable death; for till you can fetch comfort from the life to come, you can have no comfort that true reason can justify.

III. Live as in a constant war against all fleshly lusts, and love not the world, as it cherisheth those lusts. Take heed of the love of money, as the root of manifold evils: think of riches with more fear than desire; seeing Christ hath told us, how hard and dangerous it maketh our way to heaven. When once a man falls deeply in love with riches, he is never to be trusted, but becomes false to God, to all others, and to himself.

IV. Be furnished beforehand with expectation and patience, for all evils that may befall you; and make not too great a

matter of sufferings, especially poverty, or wrong from men. It is sin and folly in poor men, that they overvalue riches, and be not thankful for their peculiar blessings. I am in hopes, that God will give you more quietness than many others, because there are none of you rich; it is a great means of safety to have nothing that tempteth another man's desire, nor that he envieth you for; despised men live quietly, and he that hath an empty purse, can sing among the robbers; he that lieth on the ground, feareth not falling. When Judea (and so when England by Saxons, Danes, &c.) was conquered, the poor were let alone to possess and till the land, and had more than before. It was the great and rich that were destroyed, or carried, or driven away. Is it not a great benefit to have your souls saved from rich men's temptations, and your bodies from the envy, assaults, and fears, and miseries that they are under?

V. Take heed of a self-conceited, unhumbléd understanding, and of hasty and rash conclusions; it is the fool that rageth, and is confident: sober men are conscious of so much darkness and weakness, that they are suspicious of their apprehensions: proud self-conceitedness, and rash, hasty concluding, causeth most of the mischiefs in the world; which might be prevented, if men had the humility and patience to stay till things be thoroughly weighed and tried. Be not ashamed to profess uncertainty, where you are indeed uncertain. Humble doubting is much safer than confident erring.

VI. Maintain union and communion with all true Christians on earth; and therefore, hold to catholic principles of mere Christianity, without which you must needs crumble into sects. Love Christians as Christians, but the best most; locally separate from none, as accusing of them further than they separate from Christ, or deny you their communion, unless you will sin. The zeal of a sect as such, is partial, turbulent, hurtful to dissenters, and maketh men as thorns and thistles; but the zeal of Christianity as such, is pure and peaceable, full of mercy, and good fruits, mellow, and sweet, and inclineth to the good of all. If God give you a faithful, or a tolerable public minister; be thankful to God, and love, honour, and encourage him; and let not the imperfections of the Common Prayer make you separate from his communion; prejudice will make all modes of worship different from that which we prefer, to seem some heinous, sinful crime; but humble Christians are most careful about the frame of their own hearts, and conscious of so much faultiness in

themselves, and all their service of God, that they are not apt to accuse and aggravate the failings of others, especially in matters which God has left to our own determination. Whether we shall pray with a book, or without, in divers short prayers, or one long one; whether the people shall sing God's praise in tunes, or speak it in prose, &c., is left to be determined by the general rules of concord, order, and edification. Yet do not withdraw from the communion of soberly, godly non-conformists, though falsely called schismatics by others.

VII. Be sure that you maintain due honour and subjection to your governors: "Fear the Lord and the king, and meddle not with them that are given to change." (Prov. xxiv. 21.) And that in regard of the oath of God, (Eccles. viii. 2,) "Curse not the king, no not in thy thought, and curse not the rich in thy bed-chamber; for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter." (Eccles. x. 20.) Obey God with your first and absolute obedience, and no man against him, but obey the just commands of magistrates, and that out of obedience to God; and suffer patiently when you cannot obey. And if God should ever cast you under oppressing and persecuting governors, in your patience possess your souls; trust God and keep your innocency, and abhor all thoughts of rebellion or revenge; he that believeth will not make haste. Do nothing but what God will own, and then commit yourselves and your way to him. Repress wrath, and hate unpeaceable counsels; our way and our time must be only God's way and time. Self-saving men are usually the destroyers of themselves and others. Peter, that drew his sword for Christ, denied him the same night, with oaths and curses. Fools trust themselves, and wise men trust God: fools tear the tree, by beating down the fruit that is unripe and harsh; and wise men stay till it is ripe and sweet, and will drop into their hands: fools rip up the mother for an untimely birth; but wise men stay till maturity give it them. Fools take red-hot iron to be gold, till it burn their fingers to the bone; they rush into seditions and blood, as if it were a matter of jest; but wise men sow the fruit of righteousness in peace, and as much as in them lieth, live peaceably with all men: all men are mortal, both oppressors and oppressed: stay a little, and mortality will change the scene; God's time is best. Martyrdom seldom killeth the hundredth part so many as wars do: and he is no true-believer that taketh martyrdom to be his loss: and Christ is

more interested in his gospel, church, and honour than we. Queen Mary's cruelties, and the bishops' bonfires, made religion universally received the more easily when her short reign was ended. We may learn wit of the fool, that seeing great guns and muskets, asked, what they were to do; and the answerer said to 'kill men:' saith he, 'Do not men die here without killing? In our country they will die of themselves.'

VIII. Be sure that you keep up family religion; especially in the careful education of youth. Keep them from evil company, and from temptations; and especially of idleness, fulness, and baits of lust. Read the Scripture and good books, and call upon God, and sing his praise; and recreate youth with reading the history of the church, and the lives of holy men and martyrs: instruct them in catechisms and fundamentals.

IX. Above all, live in love to God and man; and let not selfishness and worldliness prevail against it. Think of God's goodness, as equal to his greatness and wisdom; and take yourselves as members of the same body with all true Christians. Blessed are they that faithfully practise those three grand principles which all profess, viz., 1. To love God as God above all, (and so to obey him.) 2. To love our neighbours as ourselves. 3. And to do as we would be done by. Love is not envious, malignant, censorious; it slandereth not; it persecuteth not; it oppresseth not; it defraudeth not; it striveth not to gain by another's loss: get men once to love their neighbours as themselves, and you may easily prognosticate peace, quietness, and concord; happiness to the land; and salvation to the people's souls.

Finally, brethren, live in love, and the God of love and peace shall be among you. The Lord save you from the evils of which I have here, and often warned you. Remember with thankfulness, the many years of abundant mercy which we have enjoyed, (though too much mixed with our sins, and vilified by some.) "Comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do; and I beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love, for their work sake, and be at peace among yourselves." (1 Thess. v. 11-13.) And the Lord deeply write on all our hearts these blessed words, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us: God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John iv. 16.) And remember,

“Seeing all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (2 Peter iii. 11—13.)

I need not lengthen my counsels further to you now, having been called by the will and providence of God to leave behind me a multitude of books, which may remember you of what you heard, and acquaint the world what doctrine I have taught you, and if longer studies shall teach me to retract and amend many failings, in the writings or practice of my unripe, and less unexperienced age, as it will be to myself as pleasing as the cure of bodily disease, I hope it will not seem strange or ungrateful to you; though we must hold fast the truth which we have received, both you and I are much to be blamed, if we grow not in knowledge, both in matter, words, and method: the Lord grant that also we may grow in faith, obedience, patience in hope, love, and desire to be with Christ.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Heb. xiii. 20, 21.)

MR. BAXTER'S
DYING THOUGHTS

UPON

PHILIPPIANS i. 23.

WRITTEN FOR HIS OWN USE IN THE LATTER TIMES OF HIS
CORPORAL PAINS AND WEAKNESS.



THE
PREFACE TO THE READER.

READER,

I HAVE no other use for a preface to this book, but to give you a true excuse for its publication. I wrote it for myself, unresolved whether any one should ever see it, but at last inclined to leave that to the will of my executors, to publish or suppress it when I am dead, as they saw cause. But my person being seized on, and my library, and all my goods distrained on by constables, and sold, and I constrained to 'relinquish my house, (for preaching and being in London,) I knew not what to do with multitudes of manuscripts that had long lain by me; having no house to go to, but a narrow hired lodging with strangers: wherefore I cast away whole volumes, which I could not carry away, both controversies and letters practical, and cases of conscience, but having newly lain divers weeks, night and day, in waking torments, nephritic and colic, after other long pains and languor, I took this book with me in my removal, for my own use in my further sickness. Three weeks after, falling into another extreme fit, and expecting death, where I had no friend with me to commit my papers to, merely lest it should be lost, I thought best to give it to the printer. I think it is so much of the work of all men's lives to prepare to die with safety and comfort, that the same thoughts may be needful for others that are so for me. If any mislike the title, as if it imported that the author is dead, let him know that I die daily, and that which quickly will be, almost is: it is suited to my own use: they that it is unsuitable to, may pass it by. If those men's lives were spent in serious, preparing thoughts of death, who are now studying to destroy each other, and tear in pieces a distressed land, they would prevent much dolorous repentance.

RICHARD BAXTER.

THE exercise of three sorts of love, to God, to others, and to myself, afford me a threefold satisfaction, conjunct, to be willing to depart.

I. I am sure my departure will be the fulfilling of that will which is love itself, which I am bound, above all things, to love and please, and which is the beginning, rule, and end of all. Antonine could hence fetch good thoughts of death.

II. The world dieth not with me when I die; nor the church, nor the praise and glory of God, which he will have in and from this world unto the end: and if I love others as myself, their lives and comforts will now be to my thoughts, as if I were to live myself in them. God will be praised and honoured by posterity when I am dead and gone. Were I to be annihilated, this would comfort me now, if I lived and died in perfect love.

III. But a better and glorious world is before me, into which I hope, by death, to be translated, whither all these three sorts of love should wrap up the desires of my ascending soul; even the love of myself, that I may be fully happy; the love of the triumphant church, Christ, angels, and glorified man, and the glory of all the universe, which I shall see; and above all, the love of the most glorious God, infinite life, and light, and love, the ultimate, amiable object of man's love; in whom to be perfectly pleased and delighted, and to whom to be perfectly pleasing for ever, is the chief and ultimate end of me, and of the highest, wisest, and best of creatures. Amen.

THE INTRODUCTION.

PHIL. i. 23.

For I am in a strait betwixt two, &c.

I WRITE for myself, and therefore, supposing the sense of the text, shall only observe what is useful to my heart and practice.

It was a happy state into which grace had brought this apostle, who saw so much, not only tolerable, but greatly desirable, both in living and dying. To live, to him, was Christ, that is, Christ's interest, or work. To die would be gain, that is, his own interest and reward. His strait was not whether it would be good to live or good to depart, both were good, but which was more desirable was the doubt.

I. Quest. But was there any doubt to be made between Christ's interest and his own? Answ. No, if it had been a full and fixed competition; but by Christ, or Christ's interest, he meaneth his work for his church's interest in this world; but he knew that Christ also had an interest in his saints above, and that he could raise up more to serve him here; yet, because he was to judge by what appeared, and he saw a defect of such on earth, this did turn the scales in his choice; and for the work of Christ and his church's good, he more inclined to the delay of his reward, by self-denial; yet knowing that the delay would tend to its increase. It is useful to me here to note,

That, even in this world, short of death, there is some good so much to be regarded, as may justly prevail with believers to prefer it before the present hastening of their reward.

I the rather note this, that no temptation carry me into that extreme, of taking nothing but heaven to be worthy of our minding or regard, and so to cast off the world in a sinful sort, on pretence of mortification, and a heavenly mind, and life.

I. As to the sense, the meaning is not that any thing on earth is better than heaven, or simply, and in itself, to be preferred before it. The end is better than the means as such, and perfection better than imperfection.

But the present use of the means may be preferred sometimes before the present possession of the end, and the use of means for a higher end may be preferred before the present possession of a lower end, and every thing hath its season. Planting, and sowing, and building, are not so good as reaping, and fruit-gathering, and dwelling, but in their season, they must be first done.

II. Quest. But what is there so desirable in this life ?

Ans. I. While it continueth, it is the fulfilling of the will of God, who will have us here ; and that is best which God willeth.

II. The life to come dependeth upon this, as the life of man in the world upon his generation in the womb ; or as the reward upon the work ; or the runner's or soldier's prize upon his race or fighting ; or as the merchant's gain upon his voyage. Heaven is won or lost on earth. The possession is there, but the preparation is here. Christ will judge all men according to their works on earth. " Well done, good and faithful servant," must go before " Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." " I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course," goeth before " the crown of righteousness which God, the righteous Judge, will give." All that ever must be done for salvation by us, must here be done. It was on earth that Christ himself wrought the work of our redemption, fulfilled all righteousness, became our ransom, and paid the price of our salvation, and it is here that our part is to be done.

And the bestowing of the reward is God's work, who, we are sure, will never fail. There is no place for the least suspicion or fear of his misdoing, or failing, in any of his undertaken work. But the danger and fear is of our own miscarrying, lest we be not found capable of receiving what God will certainly give to all that are disposed receivers. To distrust God is heinous sin and folly, but to distrust ourselves we have great cause. So that if we will make sure of heaven, it must be by giving all diligence to make firm our title, our calling, and our election, here on earth. If we fear hell, we must fear being prepared for it.

And it is great and difficult work that must be here done. It is here that we must be cured of all damning sin ; that we must be regenerate and new born ; that we must be pardoned and justified by faith. It is here that we must be united to Christ, made wise to salvation, renewed by his Spirit, and conformed to his likeness. It is here that we must overcome all the tempt-

ations of the devil, the world, and the flesh, and perform all the duties towards God and man, that must be rewarded. It is here that Christ must be believed in with the heart to righteousness, and with the mouth confessed to salvation. It is here that we must suffer with him, that we may reign with him, and be faithful to the death, that we may receive the crown of life. Here we must so run that we may obtain.

III. Yea, we have greater work here to do than mere securing our own salvation. We are members of the world and church, and we must labour to do good to many. We are trusted with our Master's talents for his service, in our places to do our best to propagate his truth, and grace, and church; and to bring home souls, and honour his cause, and edify his flock, and further the salvation of as many as we can. All this is to be done on earth, if we will secure the end of all in heaven.

Use 1. It is, then, an error (though it is but few, I think, that are guilty of it,) to think that all religion lieth in minding only the life to come, and disregarding all things in this present life, all true Christians must seriously mind both the end and the means, or way. If they mind not, believingly, the end, they will never be faithful in the use of means. If they mind not, and use not diligently, the means, they will never obtain the end. None can use earth well that prefer not heaven, and none come to heaven, at age, that are not prepared by well using earth. Heaven must have the deepest esteem, and habituated love, and desire, and joy; but earth must have more of our daily thoughts for present practice. A man that travelleth to the most desirable home, hath a habit of desire to it all the way, but his present business is his travel; and horse, and company, and inns, and ways, and weariness, &c., may take up more of his sensible thoughts, and of his talk, and action, than his home.

Use 2. I have oft marvelled to find David, in the Psalms, and other saints, before Christ's coming, to have expressed so great a sense of the things of this present life, and to have said so little of another. To have made so great a matter of prosperity, dominions, and victories, on one hand, and of enemies, success, and persecution, on the other. But I consider that it was not for mere personal, carnal interest, but for the church of God, and for his honour, word, and worship. And they knew that if things go well with us on earth, they will be sure to go well in heaven. If the militant church prosper in holiness, there is no doubt but it will triumph in glory. God will be sure to do his part in

receiving souls, if they be here prepared for his receipt. And Satan doth much of his damning work by men; if we escape their temptations, we escape much of our danger. If idolaters prospered, Israel was tempted to idolatry. The Greek church is almost swallowed up by Turkish prosperity and dominion. Most follow the powerful and prosperous side. And, therefore, for God's cause, and for heavenly, everlasting interest, our own state, but much more the church's, must be greatly regarded here on earth.

Indeed, if earth be desired only for earth, and prosperity loved but for the present welfare of the flesh, it is the certain mark of damning carnality, and an earthly mind. But to desire peace, and prosperity, and power, to be in the hands of wise and faithful men, for the sake of souls, and the increase of the church, and the honour of God, that his name may be hallowed, his kingdom come, and his will done on earth, as it is in heaven. This is to be the chief of our prayers to God.

Use 3. Be not unthankful, then, O my soul, for the mercies of this present life, for those to thy body, to thy friends, to the land of thy nativity, and especially to the church of God.

1. This body is so nearly united to thee, that it must needs be a great help, or hinderance. Had it been more afflicted, it might have been a discouraging clog; like a tired horse in a journey, or an ill tool to a workman, or an untuned instrument in music. A sick or bad servant in an house is a great trouble, and a bad wife much more, but thy body is nearer thee than either, and will be more of thy concern.

And yet if it had been more strong and healthful, sense and appetite would have been strong, and lust would have been strong, and therefore danger would have been greater, and victory and salvation much more difficult. Even weak senses and temptations have too oft prevailed. How knowest thou, then, what stronger might have done? When I see a thirsty man in a fever or dropsy, and especially when I see strong and healthful youths, bred up in fulness, and among temptations, how mad they are in sin, and how violently they are carried to it, bearing down God's rebukes, and conscience, and parents, and friends, and all regard to their salvation, it tells me how great a mercy I had, even in a body not liable to their case.

And many a bodily deliverance hath been of great use to my soul, renewing my time, and opportunity, and strength, for service, and bringing frequent and fresh reports of the love of God.

If bodily mercies were not of great use to the soul, Christ would not so much have showed his saving love, by healing all manner of diseases, as he did. Nor would God promise us a resurrection of the body, if a congruous body did not further the welfare of the soul.

2. And I am obliged to great thankfulness to God for the mercies of this life which he hath showed to my friends; that which furthers their joy should increase mine. I ought to rejoice with them that rejoice. Nature and grace teach us to be glad when our friends are well, and prosper, though all in order to better things than bodily welfare.

3. And such mercies of this life to the land of our habitation must not be undervalued. The want of them are parts of God's threatened curse; and godliness hath the promise of this life, and of that which is to come, and so is profitable to all things. And when God sends on a land the plagues of famine, pestilence, war, persecution, especially a famine of the word of God, it is a great sin to be insensible of it. If any shall say, 'while heaven is sure, we have no cause to accuse God, or to cast away comfort, hope, or duty,' they say well; but if they say, 'because heaven is all, we must make light of all that befall us on earth,' they say amiss.

Good princes, magistrates, and public-spirited men that promote the safety, peace, and true prosperity of the commonwealth, do hereby very much befriend religion, and men's salvation; and are greatly to be loved and honoured by all. If the civil state, called the commonwealth, do miscarry, or fall into ruin and calamity, the church will fare the worse for it, as the soul doth by the ruins of the body. The Turkish, Muscovite, and such other empires, tell us, how the church consumeth, and dwindles away into contempt, or withered ceremony and formality, where tyranny brings slavery, beggary, or long persecution on the subjects. Doubtless, divers passages in the Revelations contain the church's glorifying of God, for their power and prosperity on earth, when emperors became Christians: what else can be meant well by Rev. ix. 10, "Hath made us kings and priests to God, and we shall reign on the earth". But that Christians shall be brought from under heathen persecution, and have rule and sacred honour in the world, some of them being princes; some honoured church guides; and all a peculiar, honoured people. And had not Satan found out that cursed way of getting wicked men, that hate true godliness and peace,

into the sacred places of princes and pastors, to do his work against Christ, as in Chrjst's name; surely no good Christians would have grudged at the power of rulers of state, or church. Sure I am, that many, called fifth-monarchy-men, seem to make this their great hope, that rule shall be in the hands of righteous men; and I think, most religious parties would rejoice if those had very great power, whom they take to be the best and trustiest men; which shows that it is not the greatness of power in most princes, or sound bishops, that they dislike, but the badness, real or supposed, of those whose power they dislike: who will blame power to do good?

Sure the three first and great petitions of the Lord's prayer include some temporal welfare of the world and church, without which the spiritual rarely prospereth extensively, (though intensively in a few it may,) since miracles ceased.

4. Be thankful, therefore, for all the church's mercies here on earth; for all the protection of magistracy; the plenty of preachers; the preservation from enemies; the restraint of persecution; the concord of Christians; and increase of godliness; which in this land it hath had in our ages; notwithstanding all Satan's malignant rage, and all the bloody wars that have interrupted our tranquillity. How many psalms of joyful thanksgiving be there for Israel's deliverances, and the preservation of Zion, and God's worship in his sanctuary: pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love it; especially, that the gospel is continued, while so many rage against it, is a mercy not to be made light of.

Use 4. Be specially thankful, O my soul, that God hath made any use of thee, for the service of his church on earth. My God, my soul for this doth magnify thee, and my spirit rejoiceth in the review of thy great undeserved mercy! Oh! what am I, whom thou tookest up from the dunghill or low obscurity, that I should live, myself, in the constant relish of thy sweet and sacred truth, and with such encouraging success communicate it to others? That I must say now my public work seems ended, that these forty-three or forty-four years, I have no reason to think that ever I laboured in vain! O with what gratitude must I look upon all places where I lived and laboured; but, above all, that place that had my strength. I bless thee for the great numbers gone to heaven, and for the continuance of piety, humility, concord, and peace among them.

And for all that by my writings have received any saving

light and grace. O my God! let not my own heart be barren while I labour in thy husbandry, to bring others unto holy fruit. Let me not be a stranger to the life and power of that saving truth which I have done so much to communicate to others. O let not my own words and writings condemn me as void of that divine and heavenly nature and life, which I have said so much for to the world.

Use 5. Stir up, then, O my soul, thy sincere desires, and all thy faculties, to do the remnant of the work of Christ appointed thee on earth, and then joyfully wait for the heavenly perfection in God's own time.

Thou canst truly say, "To live, to me, is Christ." It is his work for which thou livest: thou has no other business in the world; but thou dost his work with the mixture of many oversights and imperfections, and too much troublest thy thoughts distrustfully about God's part, who never faileth; if thy work be done, be thankful for what is past, and that thou art come so near the port of rest: if God will add any more to thy days, serve him with double alacrity, now thou art so near the end: the prize is almost within sight: time is swift, and short. Thou hast told others that there is no working in the grave, and that it must be now or never. Though the conceit of meriting of commutative justice be no better than madness, dream not that God will save the wicked, no, nor equally reward the slothful and the diligent, because Christ's righteousness was perfect. Paternal justice maketh difference according to that worthiness which is so denominated by the law of grace; and as sin is its own punishment, holiness and obedience is much of its own reward: whatever God appointeth thee to do, see that thou do it sincerely, and with all thy might: if sin dispose men to be angry because it is detected, disgraced, and resisted, if God be pleased, their wrath should be patiently borne, who will shortly be far more angry with themselves. If slander and obloquy survive, so will the better effects on those that are converted; and there is no comparison between these. I shall not be hurt, when I am with Christ, by the calumnies of men on earth; but the saving benefit will, by converted sinners, be enjoyed everlastingly: words and actions are transient things, and, being once past, are nothing; but the effect of them, on an immortal soul, may be endless. All the sermons that I have preached are nothing now; but the grace of God, on sanctified souls, is the beginning of eternal life. It is unspeakable mercy to be

sincerely thus employed with success; therefore, I had reason, all this while, to be in Paul's strait, and make no haste in my desires to depart. The crown will come in its due time; and eternity is long enough to enjoy it, how long soever it be delayed: but if I will do that which must obtain it for myself and others, it must be quickly done, before my declining sun be set.

O that I had no worse causes of my unwillingness yet to die, than my desire to do the work of life for my own and other men's salvation; and to finish my course with joy, and the ministry committed to me by the Lord.

Use 6. And as it is on earth that I must do good to others, so it must be in a manner suited to their state on earth. Souls are here closely united to bodies, by which they must receive much good or hurt: do good to men's bodies, if thou wouldest do good to their souls; say not, things corporeal are worthless trifles, for which the receivers will be never the better; they are things that nature is easily sensible of; and sense is the passage to the mind and will. Dost not thou find what a help it is to thyself to have, at any time, any ease and alacrity of body? And what a burden and hinderance pains and cares are? Labour, then, to free others from such burdens and temptations, and be not regardless of them. If thou must rejoice with them that rejoice, and mourn with them that mourn, further thy own joy in furthering theirs; and avoid thy own sorrows, in avoiding or curing theirs.

But, alas! what power hath selfishness in most. How easily do we bear our brethren's pains, reproaches, wants, and afflictions, in comparison of our own: how few thoughts, and how little cost or labour, do we use for their supply, in comparison of what we do for ourselves. Nature, indeed, teacheth us to be most sensible of our own case; but grace tells us, that we should not make so great a difference as we do, but should love our neighbours as ourselves.

Use 7. And now, O my soul, consider how mercifully God hath dealt with thee, that thy strait should be, between two conditions, so desirable. I shall either die speedily, or stay yet longer upon earth; whichever it be, it will be a merciful and comfortable state; that it is desirable to depart and be with Christ, I must not doubt, and shall anon more copiously consider. And if my abode on earth yet longer be so great a mercy as to be put in the balance against my present posses-

sion of heaven, surely it must be a state which obligeth me to great thankfulness to God, and comfortable acknowledgment; and surely it is not my pain, or sickness, my sufferings from malicious men, that should make this life on earth unacceptable, while God will continue it. Paul had his prick or thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him, and suffered more from men (though less in his health) than I have done; and yet he gloried in such infirmities, and rejoiced in his tribulations, and was in a strait between living and dying, yea, rather chose to live yet longer.

Alas! it is another kind of strait that most of the world are in: the strait of most is between the desire of life for fleshly interest, and the fear of death, as ending their felicity: the strait of many is, between a tiring world and body, which maketh them weary of living, and the dreadful prospect of future danger, which makes them afraid of dying; if they live, it is in misery; if they must die, they are afraid of greater misery. Which way ever they look, behind or before them, to this world or the next, fear and trouble is their lot; yea, many an upright Christian, through the weakness of their trust in God, doth live in this perplexed strait; weary of living, and afraid of dying; between grief and fear, they are pressed continually; but Paul's strait was between two joys; which of them he should desire most: and if that be my case, what should much interrupt my peace or pleasure? If I live, it is for Christ; for his work, and for his church; for preparation; for my own and others' everlasting felicity: and should any suffering, which maketh me not unserviceable, make me impatient with such a work, and such a life? If I die presently, it is my gain; God who appointeth me my work, doth limit my time, and sure his glorious reward can never be unseasonable, or come too soon, if it be the time that he appointeth. When I first engaged myself to preach the gospel, I reckoned (as probable) but upon one or two years; and God hath continued me yet above forty-four: (with such interruptions as others in these times have had;) and what reason have I now to be unwilling, either to live or die? God's service hath been so sweet to me, that it hath overcome the trouble of constant pains, or weakness, of the flesh, and all that men have said or done against me.

But the following crown exceeds this pleasure, more than I am here capable to conceive. There is some trouble in all this pleasant work, from which the soul and flesh would rest; and

blessed are the dead, that die in the Lord; even so saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them.

But, O my soul, what needest thou be troubled in this kind of strait? It is not left to thee to choose whether or when thou wilt live or die. It is God that will determine it, who is infinitely fitter to choose than thou. Leave, therefore, his own work to himself, and mind that which is thine; whilst thou livest, live to Christ; and when thou diest, thou shalt die to Christ; even into his blessed hands: so live that thou mayest say, "It is Christ liveth in me, and the life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me;" and then, as thou hast lived in the comfort of hope, thou shalt die unto the comfort of vision and fruition. And when thou canst say, "He is the God whose I am, and whom I serve," thou mayest boldly add, 'and whom I trust, and to whom I commend my departing soul; and I know whom I have trusted.'

MR. BAXTER'S

DYING THOUGHTS.

PHIL. i. 23.

For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better. (Or, for this is much rather to be preferred, or better.)

SECT. 1. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. And dost thou open thine eyes upon such a one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?" saith Job, xiv. 1—3. As a watch when it is wound up, or as a candle newly lighted, so man, newly conceived or born, beginneth a motion, which incessantly hasteth to its appointed period: and an action, and its time that is past, is nothing; so vain a thing would man be, and so vain his life, were it not for the hopes of a more durable life, which this referreth to; but those hopes, and the means, do not only difference a believer from an infidel, but a man from a beast. When Solomon describeth the difference, in respect to the time and things, of this life only, he truly tells us, "that one end here befalling both, doth show that both are here but vanity, but man's vexation is greater than the beasts'." And Paul truly saith of Christians, "That if our hope were only in this life, (that is, in the time and things of this life and world,) we were, of all men, the most miserable." Though even in this life, as related to a better, and as we are exercised about things of a higher nature than the concerns of temporal life, we are far happier than any worldlings.

Sect. 2. Being to speak to myself, I shall pass by all the rest of the matter of this text, and suppose its due explication, and spread before my soul only the doctrine and uses of these two

propositions contained in it. I. That the souls of believers, when departed hence, shall be with Christ. II. That so to be with Christ is far better for them than to be here in the body.

Sect. 3. I. Concerning the first, my thoughts shall keep this order. 1. I shall consider the necessity of believing it. 2. Whether it be best believing it, without consideration of the proofs or difficulties. 3. The certainty of it manifested for the exercise of faith.

Sect. 4. I. Whether the words signify that we shall be in the same place with Christ (which Grotius groundlessly denieth) or only in his hand, and care, and love, I will not stay to dispute. Many other texts concurring, do assure us that "we shall be with him where he is." (John xii. 26, and xvii. 24, &c.) At least, "with him," can mean no less than a state of communion, and a participation of felicity. And to believe such a state of happiness for departed souls, is of manifold necessity, or use.

Sect. 5. I. If this be not soundly believed, a man must live besides, or below, the end of life. He must have a false end, or be uncertain what should be his end.

I know it may be objected, that if I make it my end to please God, by obeying him, and doing all the good I can, and trust him with my soul and future estate, as one that is utterly uncertain what he will do with me, I have an end intended, which will make me godly, charitable, and just, and happy, so far as I am made for happiness; for the pleasing of God is the right end of all.

But, 1. Must I desire to please him no better than I do in this imperfect state, in which I have and do so much which is displeasing to him? He that must desire to please him, must desire to please him perfectly; and our desire of our ultimate end must have no bounds, or check. Am I capable of pleasing God no better than by such a sinful life as this?

2. God hath made the desire of our own felicity so necessary to the soul of man, that it cannot be expected that our desire to please him should be separated from this.

3. Therefore, both in respect of God, as the end, and of our felicity, as our second end, we must believe that he is the beautifying rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

For, 1. If we make such an ill description of God, as that he will turn our pleasing him to our loss, or will not turn it to our gain and welfare, or that we know not whether he will do so or not, it will hinder our love, and trust, and joy, in him, by which

we must please him, and, consequently, hinder the alacrity, and soundness, and constancy, of our obedience.

2. And it will much dismiss that self-love which must excite us, and it will take off part of our necessary end. And I think the objectors will confess, that if they have no certainty what God will do with them, they must have some probability and hope before they can be sincerely devoted here to please him.

Sect. 6. And, 1. If a man be but uncertain what he should make the end of his life, or what he should live for; how can he pitch upon an uncertain end? And if he waver so as to have no end, he can use no means; and if end and means be all laid by, the man liveth not as a man, but as a brute: and what a torment must it be to a considering mind to be uncertain what to intend and do in all the tenour and actions of his life? Like a man going out at his door, not knowing whither or what to do, or which way to go: either he will stand still, or move as brutes do, by present sense, or as a windmill, or weathercock, as he is moved.

Sect. 7. 2. But if he pitch upon a wrong end, it may yet be worse than none; for he will but do hurt, or make work for repentance: and all the actions of his life must be formally wrong, how good soever, materially, if the end of them be wrong.

Sect. 8. 2. And if I fetch them not from this end, and believe not in God as a rewarder of his servants, in a better life, what motives shall I have, which, in our present difficulties, will be sufficient to cause me to live a holy, yea, or a truly honest, life? All piety and honesty, indeed, is good, and goodness is desirable for itself: but the goodness of a means is its aptitude for the end; and we have here abundance of impediments, competitors, diversions, and temptations, and difficulties, of many sorts; and all these must be overcome by him that will live in piety or honesty: and our natures, we find, are diseased, and greatly indisposed to unquestionable duties; and will they ever discharge them, and conquer all these difficulties and temptations, if the necessary motive be not believed? Duty to God and man is accidentally hard and costly to the flesh, though amiable in itself. It may cost us our estates, our liberties, our lives. The world is not so happy as commonly to know good men from bad, or to encourage piety and virtue, or to forbear opposing them. And who will let go his present welfare, without some hope of better, as a reward? Men use

not to serve God for nought; nor that think it will be their loss to serve him.

Sect. 9. A life of sin will not be avoided upon lower ends and motives: nay, those lower ends, when alone, will be a constant sin themselves. A preferring vanity to glory, the creature to God, and a setting our heart on that which will never make us happy: and when lust and appetite incline men, strongly and constantly, to their several objects, what shall sufficiently restrain them, except the greater and more durable delights or motives fetched from preponderating things? Lust and appetite distinguish not between lawful and unlawful. We may see in the brutish politics of Benedictus Spinosa, in his *Tractat. Theolog. Polit.*, whither the principles of infidelity tend. If sin so overspread the earth, that the whole world is as drowned in wickedness, notwithstanding all the hopes and fears of a life to come, what would it do were there no such hopes and fears?

Sect. 10. 3. And no mercy can be truly known and estimated, nor rightly used and improved, by him that seeth not its tendency to the end, and perceiveth not that it leadeth to a better life, and useth it not thereunto. God dealeth more bountifully with us than worldlings understand. He giveth us all the mercies of this life, as helps to an immortal state of glory, and as earnest of it. Sensualists know not what a soul is, nor what soul mercies are; and, therefore, not what the soul of all bodily mercies are, but take up only with the carcass, shell, or shadow. If the king would give me a lordship, and send me a horse, or coach, to carry me to it, and I should only ride about the fields for my pleasure, and make no other use of it, should I not undervalue and lose the principal benefit of my horse, or coach? No wonder if unbelievers be unthankful, when they know not at all that part of God's mercies which is the life and real excellency of them.

Sect. 11. 4. And, alas! how should I bear with comfort the sufferings of this wretched life, without the hopes of a life with Christ? What should support and comfort me under my bodily languishings and pains, my weary hours, and my daily experience of the vanity and vexation of all things under the sun, had I not a prospect of a comfortable end of all? I that have lived in the midst of great and precious mercies, have all my life had something to do to overcome the temptation of wishing that I had never been born, and had never overcome it

but by the belief of a blessed life hereafter. Solomon's sense of vanity and vexation hath long made all the business, and wealth, and honour, and pleasure, of this world, as such, appear such a dream and shadow to me, that were it not for the end, I could not have much differenced men's sleeping and their waking thoughts, nor have much more valued the waking than the sleeping part of life, but should have thought it a kind of happiness to have slept from the birth unto the death. Children cry when they come into the world; and I am often sorry when I am awakened out of a quiet sleep, especially to the business of an unquiet day. We should be strongly tempted, in our considering state, to murmur at our Creator, as dealing much hardlier by us than by the brutes, if we must have had all those cares, and griefs, and fears, by the knowledge of what we want, and the prospect of death, and future evils, which they are exempted from, and had not, withal, had the hopes of a future felicity to support us. Seneca and his stoics had no better argument to silence such murmurers who believed not a better life, than to tell them, that if this life had more evil than good, and they thought God did them wrong, they might remedy themselves by ending it when they would. But that would not cure the repinings of a nature which found itself necessarily weary of the miseries of life, and yet afraid of dying. And it is no great wonder that many thought that pre-existent souls were put into these bodies as a punishment of something done in a former life, while they foresaw not the hoped end of all our fears and sorrows. 'O how contemptible a thing is man!' saith the same Seneca, 'unless he lift up himself above human things.' Therefore; saith Solomon, when he had glutted himself with all temporal pleasures, "I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous to me; for all is vanity and vexation of spirit." (Eccles. ii. 17.)

Sect. 12. II. I have often thought whether an implicit belief of a future happiness, without any search into its nature, and thinking of any thing that can be said against it, or the searching, trying way, be better. On the one side, I have known many godly women that never disputed the matter, but served God, comfortably, to a very old age, (between eighty and one hundred,) to have lived many years in a cheerful readiness and desire of death, and such as few learned, studious men do ever attain to in that degree, who, no doubt, had this as a divine reward of their long and faithful service of God, and trusting in him. On

the other side, a studious man can hardly keep off all objections, or secure his mind against the suggestions of difficulties and doubts; and if they come in, they must be answered, seeing we give them half a victory if we cast them off before we can answer them. And a faith that is not upheld by such evidence of truth as reason can discern and justify, is oft joined with much secret doubting, which men dare not open, but do not, therefore, overcome, and its weakness may have a weakening deficiency, as to all the graces and duties which should be strengthened by it. And who knoweth how soon a temptation from Satan, or infidels, or our own dark hearts, may assault us, which will not, without such evidence and resolving light, be overcome? And yet many that try, and reason, and dispute most, have not the strongest, or most powerful faith.

Sect. 13. And my thoughts of this have had this issue. 1. There is a great difference between that light which showeth us the thing itself, and that artificial skill by which we have right notions, names, definitions, and formed arguments, and answers to objections. This artificial, logical, organical kind of knowledge is good and useful in its kind, if right; like speech itself: but he that hath much of this, may have little of the former: and unlearned persons that have little of this, may have more of the former, and may have those inward perceptions of the verity of the promises and rewards of God, which they cannot bring forth into artificial reasonings to themselves or others; who are taught of God, by the effective sort of teaching which reacheth the heart, or will, as well as the understanding, and is a giving of what is taught, and a making us such as we are told we must be.* And who findeth not need to pray hard for this effective teaching of God, when he hath got all organical knowledge, and words and arguments in themselves most apt, at his fingers' ends, as we say? When I can prove the truth of the word of God, and the life to come, with the most convincing, undeniable reasons, I feel need to cry and pray daily to God, to increase my faith, and to give me that light which may satisfy the soul, and reach the end.

Sect. 14. 2. Yet man, being a rational wight, is not taught by mere instinct and inspiration, and therefore this effective teaching of God doth ordinarily suppose a rational, objective, organical teaching and knowledge. And the foresaid unlearned

* This is the true mean between George Keith the Quaker's doctrine of continued inspiration and intuition, and that on the other extreme.

Christians are convinced, by good evidence, that God's word is true, and his rewards are sure, though they have but a confused conception of this evidence, and cannot word it, nor reduce it to fit notions. And to drive these that have fundamental evidence, unseasonably and hastily to dispute their faith, and so to puzzle them by words and artificial objections, is but to hurt them, by setting the artificial, organical, lower part, which is the body of knowledge, against the real light and perception of the thing, (which is as the soul,) even as carnal men set the creatures against God, that should lead us to God, so do they by logical, artificial knowledge.

Sect. 15. But they that are prepared for such disputes, and furnished with all artificial helps, may make good use of them for defending and clearing up the truth to themselves and others, so be it they use them as a means to the due end, and in a right manner, and set them not up against, or instead of, the real and effective light.

Sect. 16. But the revealed and necessary part must here be distinguished from the unrevealed and unnecessary. To study till we, as clearly as may be, understand the certainty of a future happiness, and wherein it consisteth, (in the sight of God's glory, and in perfect, holy, mutual love, in union with Christ, and all the blessed,) this is of great use to our holiness and peace. But when we will know more than God would have us, it doth but tend (as gazing on the sun) to make us blind, and to doubt of certainties, because we cannot be resolved of uncertainties. To trouble our heads too much in thinking how souls out of the body do subsist and act, sensitively or not, by organs, or without; how far they are one, and how far still individuate, in what place they shall remain, and where is their paradise, or heaven; how they shall be again united to the body, whether by their own emission, as the sunbeams touch their objects here, and whether the body shall be restored, as the consumed flesh of restored, sick men, *aliunde*, or only from the old materials. A hundred of these questions are better left to the knowledge of Christ, lest we do but foolishly make snares for ourselves. Had all these been needful to us, they had been revealed. In respect to all such curiosities and needless knowledge, it is a believer's wisdom implicitly to trust his soul to Christ, and to be satisfied that he knoweth what we know not, and to fear that vain, vexatious knowledge, or inquisitiveness into good and evil, which

is selfish, and savoureth of a distrust of God, and is that sin, and fruit of sin, which the learned world too little feareth.

Sect. 17. III. That God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, and that holy souls shall be in blessedness with Christ, these following evidences, conjoined, do evince, on which my soul doth raise its hopes.

Sect. 18. I. The soul, which is an immortal spirit, must be immortally in a good or bad condition; but man's soul is an immortal spirit, and the good are not in a bad condition. Its immortality is proved thus: A spiritual, or most pure, invisible substance, naturally endowed with the power, virtue, or faculty of vital action, intellection, and volition, which is not annihilated nor destroyed by separation of parts, nor ceaseth, or loseth, either its power, species, individuation, or action, is an immortal spirit. But such is the soul of man, as shall be manifested by parts.

Sect. 19. I. The soul is a substance, for that which is nothing can do nothing; but it doth move, understand, and will. No man will deny that this is done by something in us, and by some substance, and that substance is it which we call the soul. It is not nothing, and it is within us.

Sect. 20. As to them that say, it is the temperament of several parts conjunct, I have elsewhere fully confuted them, and proved, 1. That it is some one part that is the agent on the rest, which all they confess that think it to be the material spirits, or fiery part. It is not bones and flesh that understand, but a purer substance, as all acknowledge. 2. What part soever it be, it can do no more than it is able to do, and a conjunction of many parts, of which no one hath the power of vitality, intellection, or volition, formally, or eminently, can never by contemperation do those acts, for there can be no more in the effect than is in the cause, otherwise it were no effect.

The vanity of their objections that tell us, a lute, a watch, a book, perform that by co-operation which no one part can do, I have elsewhere manifested. 1. Many strings, indeed, have many motions, and so have many effects on the ear and fantasy, which in us are sound, and harmony: but all is but a percussion of the air by strings, and were not that motion received by a sensitive soul, it would be no music or melody; so that there is nothing done but what each part had power to do. But intellection and volition are not the conjunct motions of all parts of

the body, receiving their form in a nobler intellective nature, as the sound of the strings maketh melody in man: if it were so, that receptive nature still would be as excellent as the effect importeth. 2. And the watch, or clock, doth but move according to the action of the spring, or poise; but that it moveth in such an order as becometh to man a sign and measure of time, this is from man who ordereth it to that use. But there is nothing in the motion but what the parts have their power to cause; and that it signifieth the hour of the days to us, is no action, but an object used by a rational soul as it can use the shadow of a tree, or house, that yet doth nothing. 3. And so a book doth nothing at all, but is a mere objective ordination of passive signs, by which man's active intellect can understand what the writer or orderer did intend; so that here is nothing done beyond the power of the agent, nor any thing in the effect which was not in the cause, either formally or eminently. But for a company of atoms, of which no one hath sense or reason, to become sensitive and rational by mere conjunct motion, is an effect beyond the power of the supposed cause.

Sect. 21. But as some think so basely of our noblest acts as to think that contempered agitated atoms can perform them, that have no natural intellective, or sensitive, virtue or power in themselves, so others think so highly of them, as to take them to be the acts only of God, or some universal soul, in the body of man; and so that there is no life, sense, or reason in the world but God himself (or such an universal soul); and so that either every man is God, as to his soul, or that it is the body only that is to be called man, as distinct from God. But this is the self-ensnaring and self-perplexing temerity of busy, bold, and arrogant heads, that know not their own capacity and measure. And, on the like reasons, they must at last come, with others, to say, that all passive matter also is God, and that God is the universe, consisting of an active soul, and passive body. As if God were no cause, and could make nothing, or nothing with life, or sense, or reason.

Sect. 22. But why depart we from things certain, by such presumptions as these? Is it not certain, that there are baser creatures in the world than men or angels? Is it not certain that one man is not another? Is it not certain that some men are in torment of body and mind? And will it be a comfort to a man in such torment to tell him that he is God, or that he is part of an universal soul? Would not a man on the rack, or

in the stone, or other misery, say, ' Call me by what name you please, that easeth not my pain. If I be a part of God, or an universal soul, I am sure I am a tormented, miserable part. And if you could make me believe that God hath some parts which are not serpents, toads, devils, or wicked or tormented men, you must give me other senses, and perceptive powers, before it will comfort me to hear that I am not such a part. And if God had wicked and tormented parts on earth, why may he not have such, and I be one of them, hereafter? And if I be a holy and happy part of God, or of an universal soul on earth, why may not I hope to be such hereafter?'

Sect. 23. We deny not but that God is the continued, first cause of all being whatsoever; and that the branches and fruit depend not, as effects, so much on the causality of the stock and roots, as the creature doth on God; and that it is an impious conceit to think that the world, or any part of it, is a being independent, and separated totally from God, or subsisting without his continued causation. But cannot God cause, as a creator, by making that which is not himself? This yieldeth the self-deceiver no other honour nor happiness but what equally belongeth to a devil, to a fly, or worm, to a dunghill, or to the worst and miserablest man!

Sect. 24. II. As man's soul is a substance, so is it a substance differenced formally from all inferior substances, by an innate (indeed essential) power, virtue, or faculty, of vital action, intellection, and free-will: for we find all these acts performed by it, as motion, light, and heat are by the fire or sun. And if any should think that these actions are like those of a musician, compounded of the agents (principal and organical several) parts, could he prove it, no more would follow, but that the lower powers (the sensitive, or spirits) are to the higher as a passive organ, receiving its operations; and that the intellectual soul hath the power of causing intellection and volition by its action on the inferior parts, as a man can cause such motions of his lute, as shall be melody (not to it, but) to himself: and consequently, that as music is but a lower operation of man, (whose proper acts of intellection and volition are above it,) so intellection and volition in the body are not the noblest acts of the soul, but it performed them by an eminent power, which can do greater things. And if this could be proved, what would it tend to the unbeliever's ends, or to the disadvantage of our hopes and comforts?

Sect. 25. III. That man's soul, at death, is not annihilated, even the atomists and epicureans will grant, who think that no atom in the universe is annihilated: and we that see, not only the sun and heavens continued, but every grain of matter, and that compounds are changed by dissolution of parts, and rarefaction, or migration, &c., and not by annihilation, have no reason to dream that God will annihilate one soul (though he can do it if he please, yea, and annihilate all the world): it is a thing beyond a rational expectation.

Sect. 26. IV. And a destruction, by the dissolution of the parts of the soul, we need not fear. For, 1. Either an intellectual spirit is divisible and partible, or not; if not, we need not fear it; if it be, either it is a thing that nature tendeth to, or not: but that nature doth not tend to it, is evident. For, 1. There is naturally so strange and strong an inclination to unity, and averseness to separation in all things, that even earth and stoues, that have no other (known) natural motion, have yet an aggregate motion in their gravitation: but if you will separate the parts from the rest, it must be by force. And water is yet more averse from partition without force, and more inclined to union than earth, and air than water, and fire than air; so he that will cut a sunbeam into pieces, and make many of one, must be an extraordinary agent. And surely spirits, even intellectual spirits, will be no less averse from partition, and inclined to keep their unity, than fire, or a sunbeam is; so that naturally it is not a thing to be feared, that it should fall into pieces.

2. And he that will say, that the God of nature will change, and overcome the nature that he hath made, must give us good proofs of it, or it is not to be feared. And if he should do it as a punishment, we must find such a punishment somewhere threatened, either in his natural or supernatural law, which we do not, and therefore need not fear it.

Sect. 27. 3. But if it were to be feared, that souls were partible, and would be broken into parts, this would be no destruction of them, either as to their substance, powers, form, or action, but only a breaking of one soul into many: for being not compounded of heterogeneous parts, but, as simple elements, of homogeneous only, as every atom of earth is earth, and every drop of water in the sea is water, and every particle of air and fire is air and fire, and have all the properties of earth, water, air, and fire; so would it be with every particle of an intellectual

spirit. But who can see cause to dream of such a partition, never threatened by God ?

Sect. 28. V. And that souls lose not their formal powers, or virtues, we have great reason to conceive ; because they are their natural essence, not as mixed, but simple substances : and though some imagine that the passive elements may, by attenuation or incassation, be transmuted one into another, yet we see that earth is still earth, and water is water, and air is air ; and their conceit hath no proof : and, were it proved, it would but prove that none of these are a first or proper element : but what should an intellectual spirit be changed into ? how should it lose its formal power ? Not by nature ; for its nature hath nothing that tendeth to deterioration, or decay, or self-destruction. The sun doth not decay by its wonderful motion, light, and heat : and why should spirits ? Not by God's destroying them, or changing their nature : for, though all things are in constant motion or revolution, he continueth the natures of the simple beings, and showeth us, that he delighteth in a constancy of operations, insomuch that, hence, Aristotle thought the world eternal. And God hath made no law that threateneth to do it as a penalty. Therefore, to dream that intellectual spirits shall be turned into other things, and lose their essential, formal powers, which specify them, is without and against all sober reason. Let them first but prove that the sun loseth motion, light, and heat, and is turned into air, or water, or earth. Such changes are beyond a rational fear.

Sect. 29. VI. But some men dream that souls shall sleep, and cease their acts, though they lose not their powers. But this is more unreasonable than the former. For it must be remembered that it is not a mere obediential, passive power that we speak of ; but an active power consisting in as great an inclination to act, as passive natures have to forbear action. So that if such a nature act not, it must be because its natural inclination is hindered by a stronger : and who shall hinder it ?

1. God would not continue an active power, force, and inclination in nature, and forcibly hinder the operation of that nature which he himself continueth ; unless penally for some special cause ; which he never gave us any notice of by any threatening, but the contrary.

2. Objects will not be wanting, for all the world will be still at hand, and God above all. It is, therefore, an unreasonable conceit to think that God will continue an active, vital, intellec-

tive, volitive nature, form, power, force, inclination, in a noble substance, which shall use none of these for many hundred or thousand years, and so continue them in vain.

Nay, 3. It is rather to be thought that some action is their constant state, without which the cessation of their very form would be inferred.

Sect. 30. But all that can be said with reason is, that separated souls, and souls hereafter in spiritual bodies, will have actions of another mode, and very different from these that we now perceive in flesh: and be it so. They will yet be, radically, of the same kind, and they will be formally or eminently such as we now call, vitality, intellection, and volition; and they will be no lower or less excellent, if not far more; and then what the difference will be, Christ knoweth, whom I trust, and in season I shall know. But to talk of a dead life, and an unactive activity, or a sleeping soul, is fitter for a sleeping than a waking man.

Sect. 31. It is true that diseases or hurts do now hinder the soul's intellectual perceptions in the body, and in infancy and sleep they are imperfect. Which proveth, indeed, that the acts, commonly called intellection and volition, have now something in them also of sensation, and that sensitive operations are diversified by the organs of the several senses. And that bare intellection and volition, without any sensation is now scarce to be observed in us, though the soul may have such acts intrinsically, and in its profundity. For it is now so united to this body, that it acteth on it as our form; and, indeed, the acts observed by us cannot be denied to be such as are specified, or modified, at least, by the agents, and the recipients, and sub-agents' parts conjunct. But, 1. As the sun would do the same thing *ex parte sui*, if *in vacuo* only it sent forth its beams, though this were no illumination, or calefaction, because there were no recipient to be illuminated and heated by it. And it would lose nothing by the want of objects; so the soul, had it no body to act on, would have its profound immanent acts of self-living, self-perceiving, and self-loving; and all its external acts on other objects, which need not organs of sense for their approximation. And, 2. Its sensitive faculty is itself, or such as it is not separated from, though the particular sorts of sensation may be altered with their uses: and therefore it may still act on or with the sense: and if one way of sensation be hindered, it hath another. 3. And how far this lantern of flesh

doth help, or hinder, its operations, we know not yet, but shall know hereafter. *Sondius de Orig. Animæ*, (though an heretical writer), hath said much to prove that the body is a hindrance, and not a help, to the soul's intuition. And if ratiocination be a compound act; yet intuition may be done for ever by the soul alone. 4. But as we are not to judge what powers the soul hath when the acts are hindered, but when they are done; nor what souls were made by God for, by their state in the womb, or infancy, or diseases, but by our ordinary, mature state of life; so we have little reason to think that the same God who made them for life, intellection, and volitions here, will not continue the same powers to the same, or as noble uses hereafter, whether with organs, or without, as pleaseth him. If in this flesh our spirits were not inactive and useless, we have no reason to think that they will be so hereafter, and that for ever.

Sect. 32. This greatest and hardest of all objections, doth make us confess (with *Contarenius, contra Pomponatium de Anim. Immortalit.*,) that though, by the light of nature, we may know the immortality of souls, (and that they lose not their powers or activity,) yet, without supernatural light, we know not what manner of action they will have in their separated state, or in another world, because here they act according to objective termination, and the receptivity of the sense and fantasy, and *recipitur ad modum recipientis*; and in the womb we perceive not that it acteth intellectually at all.

But we know, That, 1. If even then it differed not in its formal power from the souls of brutes, it would not so much afterward differ in act: and it would never be raised to that which was not virtually in its nature at the first. 2. And we find that even very little children have quick and strong knowledge of such objects as are brought within their reach; and that their ignorance is not for want of an intellectual power, but for want of objects, or images of things, which time, and use, and conversation among objects, must furnish their fantasies and memories with. And so a soul in the womb, or in an apoplexy, hath not objects of intellection within its reach to act upon; but is as the sun to a room that hath no windows to let in its light. 3. And what if its profound vitality, self-perception, and self-love, be by a kind of sensation and intuition, rather than by discursive reason: I doubt not but some late philosophers make snares to themselves and others, by too much vilifying sense and

sensitive souls, as if sense were but some loseable accident of contempered atoms : but sensation (though diversified by organs and uses, and so far mutable) is the act of a noble, spiritual form and virtue. And as Chambre, and some others, make brutes a lower rank of rationals, and man another higher species, as having his nobler reason for higher ends; so for man to be the noblest order (here) of sensitives, and to have an intellect to order, and govern sensations, and connect them and improve them, were a noble work, if we had no higher. And if intellection and volition were but a higher species of internal sensation than imagination, and the fantasy and memory are, it might yet be a height that should set man specifically above the brutes. And I am daily more and more persuaded, that intellectual souls are essentially sensitive and more, and that their sensation never ceaseth. 4. And still I say, that it is to nature itself a thing unlikely, that the God of nature will long continue a soul that hath formally or naturally an intellective power, in a state in which it shall have no use of it. Let others that will inquire whether it shall have a vehicle or none to act in, and whether ærial, or igneous, and ethereal, and whether it be really an intellectual sort of fire, as material as the solar fire, whose (not compounding, but) *inadequaté-conceptus objectivi* are, an igneous substance, and formal virtue of life, sense, and intellection, with other such puzzling doubts; it satisfieth me, that God will not continue its noblest powers in vain; and how they shall be exercised, is known to him; and that God's word tells us more than nature. And withal, life, intuition, and love (or volition) are acts so natural to the soul, (as motion, light and heat, *quoad actum* to fire) that I cannot conceive how its separation should hinder them, but rather that its incorporation hindereth the two latter, by hiding objects, whatever be said of abstractive knowledge and memory.

Sect. 33. VII. But the greatest difficulty to natural knowledge is, whether souls shall continue their individuation, or rather fall into one common soul, or return so to God that gave them, as to be no more divers (or many) individuals as now; as extinguished candles are united to the illuminated air, or to the sunbeams; but of this I have elsewhere said much for others; and for myself, I find I need but this: 1. That, as I said before, either souls are partible substances or not; if not partible, how are they unible? If many may be made one, by conjunction of substances, then that one may (by God) be made many again

by partition. Either all (or many) souls are now but one, (individuate only by matter, as many gulfs in the sea, or many candles lighted by the sun,) or not; if they are not one now in several bodies, what reason have we to think that they will be one hereafter, any more than now? Augustine (*de Anim.*) was put on the question, 1. Whether souls are one, and not many. And that he utterly denieth. 2. Whether they are many, and not one. And that it seemeth he could not digest. 3. Whether they were at once both one and many. Which he thought would seem to some ridiculous, but he seemeth most to incline to. And as God is the God of nature, so nature (even of the devils themselves) dependeth on him, as I said, more than the leaves of fruit do on the tree; and we are all his offspring, and live, and move, and are in him. (Acts xvii.) But we are certain for all this, 1. That we are not God. 2. That we are yet many individuals, and not all one soul, or man. If our union should be as near as the leaves and fruit on the same tree, yet those leaves and fruit are numerous, and individual leaves and fruits, through parts of the tree. And were this proved of our present or future state, it would not alter our hopes or fears; for as now, though we all live, move, and be in God, (and, as some dream, are parts of a common soul,) yet it is certain, that some are better and happier than others; some wise and good; and some foolish and evil; some in pain and misery; and some at ease, and in pleasure; and (as I said) it is now no ease to the miserable, to be told that, radically, all souls are one; no more will it be hereafter, nor can men reasonably hope for, or fear such an union, as shall make their state the same. We see in nature, (as I have elsewhere said,) that if you graft many sorts of scions, (some sweet, some bitter, some crabs,) on the same stock, they will be one tree, and yet have diversity of fruit. If souls be not unible, nor partible substances, there is no place for this doubt: if they be, they will be still what they are, notwithstanding any such union with a common soul. As a drop of water in the sea is a separable part, and still itself; and as a crab upon the foresaid stock, or tree. And the good or bad quality ceaseth not by any union with others.

Sure we are, that all creatures are in God, by close dependence, and yet that the good are good, and the bad are bad; and that God is good, and hath no evil; and that when man is tormented, or miserable, God suffereth nothing by it, (as the

whole man doth, when but a tooth doth ache,) for he would not hurt himself were he passive. Therefore, to dream of any such cessation of our individuation by any union with a creature, as shall make the good less good or happy, or the bad less bad or miserable, is a groundless folly.

Sect. 34. Yet it is very probable, that there will be a nearer union of holy souls with God and Christ, and one another, than we can here conceive of: but this is so far from being to be feared, that it is the highest of our hopes. 1. God himself (though equally every where in his essence) doth operate very variously on his creatures. On the wicked he operateth as the first cause of nature, as his sun shineth on them. On some he operateth by common grace: to some he giveth faith to prepare them for the in-dwelling of his spirit. In believers he dwelleth by love, and they in him; and if we may use such a comparison, as Satan acteth on some only by suggestions, but on others so despotically, as that it is called his possessing them; so God's Spirit worketh on holy souls, so powerfully and constantly, as is called his possessing them. And yet, on the human nature of Christ, the divine nature of the second person hath such a further, extraordinary operation, as is justly called a personal union; which is not by a more essential presence, (for that is everywhere,) but by a peculiar operation and relation: and so holy souls being under a more felicitating operation of God, may well be said to have a nearer union with him than now they have.

Sect. 35. 2. And I observe that (as is aforesaid) all things have naturally a strong inclination to union and communion with their like: every clod and stone inclineth to the earth: water would go to water, air to air, fire to fire; birds and beasts associate with their like: and the noblest natures are most strongly thus inclined; and therefore I have natural reason to think that it will be so with holy souls.

Sect. 36. 3. And I find, that the inordinate contraction of man to himself, and to the interest of this individual person, with the defect of love to all about us, according to every creature's goodness, and especially to God, the infinite good, whom we should love above ourselves, is the very sum of all the perversity of man. And all the injustice and injury to others; and all the neglect of good works in the world; and all our daily terrors, and self-distracting, self-tormenting cares, and griefs, and fears, proceed from this inordinate love and adhesion to

ourselves; therefore I have reason to think, that in our better state, we shall perfectly love others as ourselves, and the selfish love will turn into a common and a divine love, which must be by our preferring the common, and the divine good and interest.

Sect. 37. And I am so sensible of the power and plague of selfishness, and how it now corrupteth, tempteth, and disquieteth me, that when I feel any fears, lest individuation cease, and my soul fall into one common soul, (as the stoics thought all souls did at death,) I find great cause to suspect, that this ariseth from the power of this corrupting selfishness; for reason seeth no cause at all to fear it, were it so.

Sect. 38. 4. For I find also, that the nature of love is to desire as near a union as possible; and the strongest love doth strongliest desire it. Fervent lovers think they can scarce be too much one: and love is our perfection, and therefore so is union.

Sect. 39. 5. And I find, that when Christians had the first and full pourings out of the Spirit, they had the ferventest love, and the nearest union, and the least desire of propriety and distance.

Sect 40. 6. And I find, that Christ's prayer for the felicity of his disciples, is a prayer for their unity. (John xvii. 22, 23.) And in this he placeth much of their perfection.

Sect. 41. 7. And I find also, that man is of a sociable nature, and that all men find by experience, that conjunction in societies is needful for their safety, strength, and pleasure.

Sect. 42. 8. And I find, that my soul would fain be nearer God, and that darkness and distance is my misery, and near communion is it that would answer all the tendencies of my soul; why then, should I fear too near a union.

Sect. 43. I think it utterly improbable, that my soul should become more nearly united to any creature than to God; (though it be of the same kind with other souls, and infinitely below God;) for God is as near me, as I am to myself; I still depend on him, as the effect upon its total, constant cause; and that not as the fruit upon the tree, which borroweth all from the earth, water, air, and fire, which it communicateth to its fruit; but as a creature on its Creator, who nath no being but what it receiveth totally from God, by constant communication. Hence Antonine, Seneca, and the rest of the stoics, thought that all the world was God, or one great animal, consisting of divine

spirit and matter, as man of soul and body; sometimes calling the supposed soul of the world, God; and sometimes calling the whole world, God; but still meaning that the universe was but one spirit and body united, and that we are all parts of God, or of the body of God, or accidents, at least.

Sect. 44. And even the popish mystical divines, in their pretensions to the highest perfection, say the same in sense; such as Benedict. Anglus, in his *Regula Perfectionis*, (approved by many doctors,) who placed much of his supereminent life in our believing verily that there is nothing but God, as the beams are to the sun, and as the heat is to the fire; (which really is itself;) and so teaching us to rest in all things as good, as being nothing but God's essential will, which is himself (resolving even our sins and imperfections accordingly into God, so that they are God's, or none).

Sect. 45. And all these men have as fair a pretence for the conceits of such an union with God now, as for such an union after death: for their reason is, 1. That God being infinite, there can be no more beings than his own; but God and the smallest being distinct, would be more entity than God alone; but infinity can have no addition. 2. Because *ens et bonum convertuntur*; but God only is good.

And if we are, notwithstanding all this, distinct beings from God now, we shall not be so advanced as to be deified, and of creatures, or distinct beings, turned into a being infinitely above us. If we be not parts of God now, we shall not be so then.

But if they could prove that we are so now, we should quickly prove to them, 1. That then God hath material, divisible parts (as the stoics thought). 2. And that we are no such parts as are not distinct from one another; but some are tormented, and some happy. And, 3. That (as is said) it will be no abatement of the misery of the tormented, nor of the felicity of the blessed, to tell them that they are all parts of God: for, though the manner of our union with him, and dependence on him, be past our comprehension; yet that we are distinct and distant from each other, and have each one a joy or misery of his own, is past all doubt. Therefore, there is no union with God to be feared by holy souls, but the utmost possible to be highest desired.

Sect. 46. And if our union with God shall not cease our individuation, or resolve us into a principle to be feared, we may say also of our union with any common soul, or many: if we

be unible, we are partible, and so have a distinct, though not a divided substance, which will have its proper accidents. All plants are parts of the earth, really united to it, and radicated in it, and live, and are nourished by it; and yet a vine is a vine; and an apple is an apple; and a rose is a rose; and a nettle is a nettle. And few men would be toiled horses, or toads, if it were proved that they are animated by a common soul.

Sect. 47. But God letteth us see, that though the world be one, yet he delighteth in a wonderful diversity, and multiplicity of individuals. How various and numerous are they in the sea, and on the land, and in the air. And are there none in the other world? How come the stars therein to be so numerous, which are of the same element? And though, perhaps, Saturn, or some other planets, or many stars, may send forth their radiant effluvia, or parts, into the same air, which the sunbeams seem totally to fill and illuminate, yet the rays of the sun, and of other stars, are not the same, how near soever in the same air.

Sect. 48. Were there now no more contraction by egoity, or propriety among men, nor mine and thine did signify no more, nor the distance were greater than that of the several drops of water in the sea, or particles of light in the illuminated air, but I had all my part in such a perfect unity and communion with all others, and knew that all were as happy as I, so that there were no divisions by cross interests or minds, but all were one, certainly it would make my own comforts greater by far, than they are now? Are not an hundred candles set together and united, as splendid a flame as if they were all set asunder? So one soul, one love, one joy would be.

Sect. 49. Object. But it is only the *fomes* that individuateth lights: as when the same sun, by a burning glass, lighteth a thousand candles, they are individuate only by the matter contracting, being still all united parts of the same sunbeams. And when they are extinct, they are nothing, or all one again.

Ans. They were, before they were extinct, both one and many, none but fools think that extinction annihilateth them, or any part of them; they are after as much substance, and as much solar fire, though diffused, and as much and no more one than before, but not, indeed, many as before, but parts of one. Nature hath made the equal diffused sunbeams to be to the air and surface of the earth as the blood equally moving in the body; and our candles and fires seem to be like the same blood

contracted in a bile or inflammation, which indeed is more felt than the equally diffused blood, but it is as the pain of a disease; and so when our fires go out, they are but like a healed, scattered inflammation, and the same substance is more naturally and equally diffused. And if the individuation of souls were only by corporeal matter, and the union thus as great at their departure, it would not diminish, if it did not too much increase, their perfection and felicity; for there would be no diminution of any substance, or power, or activity, or perfection whatsoever.

Sect. 50. And this would confute their fond opinion, who think that separated souls sleep *in nudá potentiá*, for want of an organized body to operate in; for no doubt, but if all holy souls were one, this world, either in heaven or earth, hath a common body, enough for such a soul to operate in. Even those stoics that think departed souls are one, do think that that one soul hath a nobler operation than ours, in our narrow bodies, and that when our souls cease animating this body, they have the nobler and sweeter work, in part, of animating the whole world; and those that thought several orbs had their several souls, of which the particular wights participated, said the like of separated souls, as animating the bodies of their globes and orbs. And though all these men trouble their heads with their own vain imaginations, yet this much the nature of the matter tells us, which is considerable, that whereas the utmost fear of the infidel is, that souls departed lose their individuation or activity, and are resolved into one common soul, or continue in a sleepy potentiality, for want of a body to operate in, they do but contradict themselves, seeing it is a notorious truth, 1. That if all holy souls were one, no one would be a loser by the union, but it would be a greater gain than we must hope for; for a part of one is as much and as noble, and as active a substance, as if it were a separated person (and annihilation, or loss of specific powers, is not to be rationally feared). 2. And that one soul is now either self-subsisting without a body, or animateth a suitable body (as some ancients thought the angels stars). If that one soul can act without a body, so may ours, whether as parts of it, or not; if that one soul animate a suitable body, ours, were they united parts of it, would have part of that employment; so that hereby they confute themselves.

Sect. 51. Obj. But this would equalize the good and bad, or

at least, those that were good in several degrees; and where then were the reward and punishment?

Ans. It would not equal them at all, any more than distinct personality would do: for, 1. The souls of all holy persons may be so united, as that the souls of the wicked shall have no part in that union. Whether the souls of the wicked shall be united in one sinful, miserable soul, or rather but in one sinful society, or be greatlier separate, disunited, contrary to each other, and militant, as part of their sin and misery, is nothing to this case. 2. Yet natural and moral union must be differenced. God is the root of nature to the worst, and however in one sense it is said, that there is nothing in God but God, yet it is true, that in him all live, and move, and have their being; but yet the wicked's in-being in God doth afford them no sanctifying or beatifying communion with him, as experience showeth us in this life; which yet holy souls have, as being made capable recipients of it. As I said, different plants, briars, and cedars, the stinking and the sweet, are implanted parts (or accidents) of the same world or earth. 3. And the godly themselves may have as different a share of happiness in one common soul, as they have now of holiness, and so as different rewards (even as roses and rosemary, and other herbs, differ in the same garden, and several fruits in the same orchard, or on the same tree). For if souls are unible, and so partible substances, they have neither more nor less of substance or holiness for their union; and so will each have his proper measure. As a tun of water cast into the sea will there still be the same, and more than a spoonful cast into it.

Sect. 52. Obj. But spirits are not as bodies extensive and quantitative, and so not partible or divisible, and therefore your supposition is vain.

Ans. 1. My supposition is but the objectors': for if they confess that spirits are substances, (as cannot with reason be denied; for they that specify their operations by motion only, yet suppose a pure proper substance to be the subject or thing moved,) then when they talk of many souls becoming one, it must be by conjunction and increase of the substance of that one: or when they say, that they were always one, they will confess withal that they now differ in number, as individuate in the body. And who will say, that millions of millions are no more than one of all those millions? Number is a sort of

quantity; and all souls in the world are more than Cain's or Abel's only; one feeleth not what another feeleth; one knoweth not what another knoweth. And indeed, though souls have not such corporeal extension, as passive, gross, bodily matter hath, yet, as they are more noble, they have a more noble sort of extension, quantity, or degrees, according to which all mankind conceive of all the spiritual substance of the universe; yea, all the angels, or all the souls on earth, as being more, and having more substance than one man's soul alone. 2. And the fathers, for the most part, especially the Greeks, (yea, and the second council of Nice,) thought that spirits created, had a purer sort of material being, which Tertullian called a body; and doubtless, all created spirits have somewhat of passiveness; for they do *recipere vel pati* from the divine influx; only God is wholly impassive. We are moved when we move, and acted when we act; and it is hard to conceive, that (when matter is commonly called passive) that which is passive should have no sort of matter in a large sense taken; and if it have any parts distinguishable, they are by God divisible. 3. But if the contrary be supposed, that all souls are no more than one, and so that there is no place for uniting or partition, there is no place then for the objection of all souls becoming one, and of losing individuation, unless they mean by annihilation.

Sect. 53. But that God who (as is said) delighteth both in the union, and yet in the wonderful multiplicity of creatures, and will not make all stars to be only one; though fire have a most uniting or aggregative inclination, hath further given experimental notice that there is individuation in the other world as well as here, even innumerable angels and devils, and not one only: as apparitions and witches, and many other evidences prove, of which more anon. So that, all things considered, there is no reason to fear that the souls shall lose their individuation or activity, (though they change their manner of action,) any more than their being or formal power: and so it is naturally certain that they are immortal.

Sect. 54. And if holy souls are so far immortal, I need not prove that they will be immortally happy; for their holiness will infer it; and few will ever dream that it shall there go ill with them that are good, and that the most just and holy God will not use those well whom he maketh holy.

Sect. 1. II. That holy souls shall be hereafter happy, seemeth to be one of the common notices of nature planted in the

consciences of mankind; and it is therefore acknowledged by the generality of the world that freely use their understandings. Most, yea almost all the heathen nations at this day believe it, besides the Mahometans; and it is the most barbarous cannibals and Brazilians that do not, whose understandings have had the least improvement, and who have rather an inconsiderate nescience of it, than a denying opposition. And though some philosophers denied it, they were a small and contemned party: and though many of the rest were somewhat dubious, it was only a certainty which they professed to want, and not a probability or opinion that it was true; and both the vulgar and the deep-studied men believed it, and those that questioned it were the half-studied philosophers, who, not resting in the natural notice, nor yet reaching full intellectual evidence of it by discourse, had found out matter of difficulty to puzzle them, and came not to that degree of wisdom as would have resolved them.

Sect. 2. And even among apostates from Christianity, most, or many, still acknowledge the soul's immortality, and the felicity and reward of holy souls, to be of the common notices, known by nature to mankind. Julian was so much persuaded of it, that, on that account, he exhorteth his priests and subjects to great strictness and holiness of life, and to see that the Christians did not exceed them: and, among us, the Lord Herbert *de Veritate*, and many others that seem not to believe our supernatural revelations of Christianity, do fully acknowledge it. Besides, those philosophers who most opposed Christianity, as Porphyrius, Maximus, Tyrius, and such others.

Sect. 3. And we find that this notice hath so deep a root in nature, that few of those that study and labour themselves into bestiality (or sadducism) are able to excuse the fears of future misery, but conscience overcometh, or troubleth them much at least, when they have done the worst they can against it. And whence should all this be in man and not in beasts, if man had no further reason of hopes and fears than they? Are a few Sadducees wiser by their forced or crude conceits, than all the world that are taught by nature itself.

Sect. 1. III. If the God of nature have made it every man's certain duty to make it his chief care and work in this life, to seek for happiness hereafter, then such a happiness there is for them that truly seek it. But the antecedent is certain, as I have elsewhere proved. *Ergo, &c.*

Sect. 2. As to the antecedent. The world is made up of three sorts of men, as to the belief of future retribution, 1. Such as take it for a certain truth; such are Christians, Mahometans, and most heathens. 2. Such as take it for uncertain, but most probable or likeliest to be true. 3. Such as take it for uncertain, but rather think it untrue. For as none can be certain that it is false, which indeed is true, so I never yet met with one that would say he was certain it was false: so that I need not trouble you with the mention of any other party or opinion; but if any should say so, it is easy to prove that he speaketh falsely of himself.

Sect. 3. And that it is the duty of all these, but especially of the two former sorts, to make it their chief care and work to seek their happiness in the life to come, is easily proved thus: natural reason requireth every man to seek that which is best for himself, with the greatest diligence; but natural reason saith that a probability or possibility of the future everlasting happiness is better and more worthy to be sought, than any thing attainable in this present life (which doth not suppose it). *Ergo, &c.*

Sect. 4. The major is past doubt. Good and felicity being necessarily desired by the will of man, that which is best, and known so to be, must be most desired.

And the minor should be as far past doubt to men that use not their sense against their reason. For, 1. In this life there is nothing certain to be continued one hour. 2. It is certain that all will quickly end, and that the longest life is short. 3. It is certain that time and pleasure past are nothing, properly nothing; and so no better to us than if they had never been. 4. And it is certain that, while we possess them, they are poor, unsatisfactory things, the pleasure of the flesh being no sweeter to a man than to a beast, and the trouble that accompanieth it much more. Beasts have not the cares, fears, and sorrows, upon foresight, which man hath. They fear not death upon the foreknowledge of it, nor fear any misery after death, nor are put upon any labour, sufferings, or trials, to obtain a future happiness, or avoid a future misery. All which considered, he speaketh not by reason, who saith this vain, vexatious life is better than the possibility or probability of the everlasting glory.

Sect. 5. Now, as to the consequence, or major, of the first argument, it is evident of itself, from God's perfection, and the nature of his works. God maketh it not man's natural duty

to lay out his chief care and labour of all his life, on that which is not, or to seek that which man was never made to attain : for then, 1. All his duty should result from mere deceit and falsehood, and God should govern all the world by a lie, which cannot be his part who wanteth neither power, wisdom, nor love, to rule them by truth and righteousness, and who hath printed his image both on his laws and on his servants ; in which laws lying is condemned, and the better any man is, the more he hateth it ; and liars are loathed by all mankind. 2. And then the better any man is, and the more he doth his duty, the more deluded, erroneous, and miserable should he be. For he should spend that care and labour of his life upon deceit, for that which he shall never have, and so should lose his time and labour : and he should deny his flesh those temporal pleasures which bad men take, and suffer persecutions and injuries from the wicked, and all for nothing, and on mistake : and the more wicked, or more unbelieving, any man is, the wiser and happier should he be, as being in the right, when he denieth the life to come, and all duty and labour in seeking it, or in avoiding future punishment ; and while he taketh his utmost pleasure here, he hath all that man was made for. . But all this is utterly unsuitable to God's perfection, and to his other works : for he maketh nothing in vain, nor can he lie, much less will he make holiness itself, and all that duty and work of life which reason itself obligeth all men, to be not only vain but hurtful to them. But of this argument I have been elsewhere larger.

Sect. 1. IV. Man differeth so much from brutes in the knowledge of God, and of his future possibilities, that it proveth that he differeth as much in his capacity and certain hopes. I. As to the antecedent, man knoweth that there is a God by his works. He knoweth that this God is our absolute Lord, our ruler, and our end. He knoweth that, naturally, we owe him all our love and obedience. He knoweth that good men use not to let their most faithful servants be losers by their fidelity ; nor do they use to set them to labour in vain. He knoweth that man's soul is immortal, or, at least, that it is far more probable that it is so ; and therefore that it must accordingly be well or ill for ever, and that this should be most cared for. 2. And why should God give him all this knowledge more than to the brutes, if he were made for no more enjoyment than the brutes, of what he knoweth. Every wise man maketh his work fit for the use that he intendeth it to : and will not God ? So that the

consequence also is proved from the divine perfection ; and if God were not perfect, he were not God. The denial of a God, therefore, is the result of the denial of man's future hopes.

Sect. 2. And, indeed, though it be but an analogical reason that brutes have, those men seem to be in the right who place the difference between man and brutes more in the objects, tendency, and work of our reason, than in our reason itself as such, and so make *animal religiosum* to be more of his description than *animal rationale*. About their own low concerns, a fox, a dog, yea, an ass, and a goose, have such actions as we know not well how to ascribe to any thing below some kind of reasoning, or a perception of the same importance. But they think not of God, and his government, and laws, nor of obeying, trusting, or loving him, nor of the hopes or fears of another life, nor of the joyful prospect of it. These are that work that man was made for, which is the chief difference from the brutes : and shall we unman ourselves ?

Sect. 1. V. The justice of God, as governor of the world, inferreth different rewards hereafter, as I have largely elsewhere proved. 1. God is not only a mover of all that moveth, but a moral ruler of man by laws, and judgment, and executions, else there were no proper law of nature, which few are so unnatural as to deny ; and man should have no proper duty, but only motion as he is moved. And then, how cometh a government by laws to be set up under God by men ? And then there were no sin or fault in any ; for if there were no law and duty, but only necessitated motion, all would be moved as the mover pleased, and there could be no sin ; and then there would be no moral good, but forced or necessary motion. But all this is most absurd ; and experience telleth us that God doth *de facto*, morally govern the world ; and his right is unquestionable.

Sect. 2. And if God were not the ruler of the world, by law and judgment, the world would have no universal laws, for there is no man that is the universal ruler : and then kings and other supreme powers would be utterly lawless and ungoverned, as having none above them to give them laws, and so they would be capable of no sin or fault, and of no punishment ; which yet neither their subjects' interest, nor their own consciences will grant, or allow them thoroughly to believe.

Sect. 3. And if God be a ruler, he is just ; or else he were not perfect, nor so good, as he requireth princes and judges on earth to be. An unjust ruler or judge is abominable to all man-

kind. Righteousness is the great attribute of the universal King.

Sect. 4. But how were he a righteous ruler, 1. If he drew all men to obey him by deceit? 2. If he obliged them to seek and expect a felicity or reward which he will never give them? 3. If he make man's duty his misery? 4. If he require him to labour in vain? 5. If he suffer the wicked to prosecute his servants to the death, and make duty costly, and give no after recompense? 6. If he let the most wicked on the earth pass unpunished, or to escape as well hereafter as the best, and to live in greater pleasure here? The objections fetched from the intrinsical good of duty I have elsewhere answered.

Sect. 1. VI. But God hath not left us to the light of mere nature, as being too dark for men so blind as we. The gospel revelation is the clear foundation of our faith and hopes. Christ hath brought life and immortality to light. One from heaven that is greater than an angel was sent to tell us what is there, and which is the way to secure our hopes. He hath risen, and conquered death, and entered before as our captain and forerunner into the everlasting habitations. And he hath all power in heaven and earth, and all judgment is committed to him, that he might give eternal life to his elect. He hath frequently and expressly promised it them, that they shall live because he liveth, and shall not perish but have everlasting life. (Matt. xxviii. 18; John v. 22, xvii. 2, xii. 26, iii. 16; Rom. viii. 35—38.) And how fully he hath proved and sealed the truth of his word and office to us, I have so largely opened in my 'Reasons of the Christian Religion,' and 'Unreasonableness of Infidelity,' and in my 'Life of Faith,' &c.; and since, in my 'Household Catechising,' that I will not here repeat it.

Sect. 2. And as all his word is full of promises of our future glory at the resurrection, so we are not without assurance that at death the departing soul doth enter upon a state of joy and blessedness. "They that died to (or in) the flesh according to men, do live in the Spirit according to God." (1 Pet. iv. 6.) For,

1. He expressly promised the penitent, crucified thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.)

2. He gave us the narrative or parable of the damned sensualist, and of Lazarus, (Luke xvi.,) to instruct us, and not to deceive us.

3. He tells the Sadducees that God is not the God of the dead

(as his subjects and beneficiaries) but of the living. (Matt. xxii. 32.)

4. Enoch and Elias were taken up to heaven, and Moses that died, appeared with Elias on the mount. (Matt. xvii.)

5. He telleth us, (Luke xii. 4,) that they that kill the body, are not able to kill the soul. Indeed, if the soul were not immortal, the resurrection were impossible. It might be a new creation of another soul, but not a resurrection of the same, if the same be annihilated. It is certain that the Jews believed the immortality of the soul, in that they believed the resurrection and future life of the same man.

6. And Christ's own soul was commended into his Father's hands, (Luke xxiii. 46,) and was in paradise, when his body was in the grave, to show us what shall become of ours.

7. And he hath promised, that where he is, there shall his servants be also. (John xii. 26.) And that the life here begun in us is eternal life, and that he that believeth in him shall not die, but shall live by him, as he liveth by the Father, for he dwelleth in God, and God in him, and in Christ, and Christ in him. (John xvii. 3, and vi. 54, and iii. 16, 36, and vi. 47, 50, 56, 57; 1 John iv. 12, 13; Luke xvii. 21; Rom. xiv. 17.)

8. And accordingly, Stephen that saw heaven opened, prayed the Lord Jesus to receive his Spirit. (Acts vii. 55, 59.)

9. And we are come to Mount Sion, &c., to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of the just made perfect. (Heb. xii. 22, 23.)

10. And Paul here desireth to depart and be with Christ as far better. And to be absent from the body, and be present with the Lord. (2 Cor. v. 8.)

11. And the dead that die in the Lord are blessed, from henceforth, that they may rest from their labours, and their works follow them.

12. And if the disobedient spirits be in prison, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, (1 Pet. iii. 19; Jude 7,) then the just have eternal life. And if the Jews had not thought the soul immortal, Saul had not desired the witch to call up Samuel to speak with him. The rest I now pass by. We have many great and precious promises on which a departed soul may trust.

13. And (Luke xvi. 9) Christ expressly saith, that when we fail, (that is, must leave this world,) we shall be received into the everlasting habitations.

Sect. 1. VII. And it is not nothing to encourage us to hope in him that hath made all these promises, when we find how he heareth prayers in this life, and thereby assureth his servants that he is their true and faithful Saviour. We are apt in our distress to cry loud for mercy and deliverances, and when human help faileth, to promise God, that if he now will save us, we will thankfully acknowledge it his work, and yet when we are delivered, to return not only to security, but to ingratitude, and think that our deliverance came but in the course of common providence, and not indeed as an answer to our prayers. And therefore God in mercy reneweth both our distresses and our deliverances, that what once or twice will not convince us of, many and great deliverances may. This is my own case. Oh, how oft have I cried to him when men and means were nothing, and when no help in second causes did appear, and how oft, and suddenly, and mercifully hath he delivered me! What sudden ease, what removal of long afflictions have I had! such extraordinary changes, and beyond my own and others' expectations, when many plain-hearted, upright Christians have, by fasting and prayer, sought God on my behalf, as have over and over convinced me of special providence, and that God is indeed a hearer of prayers. And wonders I have seen done for others also, upon such prayers, more than for myself, yea, and wonders for the church and public societies. Though I and others are too like those Israelites, (Psalm lxxviii.,) who cried to God in their troubles, and he oft delivered them out of their distress, but they quickly forgot his mercies, and their convictions, purposes, and promises, when they should have praised the Lord for his goodness, and declared his works with thanksgiving to the sons of men.

And what were all these answers and mercies but the fruits of Christ's power, fidelity, and love, the fulfillings of his promises, and the earnest of the greater blessings of immortality, which the same promises give me title to.

I know that no promise of hearing prayer setteth up our wills in absoluteness, or above God's, as if every will of ours must be fulfilled if we do but put it into a fervent or confident prayer; but if we ask any thing through Christ, according to his will, expressed in his promise, he will hear us. If a sinful love of this present life, or of ease, or wealth, or honour, should cause me to pray to God against death, or against all sickness, want, reproach, or other trials, as if I must live here in pros-

perity for ever if I ask it, this sinful desire and expectation is not the work of faith, but of presumption. What if God will not abate me my last, or daily pains? What if he will continue my life no longer, whoever pray for it, and how earnestly soever? Shall I therefore forget how oft he hath heard prayers for me? and how wonderfully he hath helped both me and others? My faith hath oft been helped by such experiences, and shall I forget them? or question them without cause at last?

Sect. 1. VIII. And it is a subordinate help to my belief of immortality with Christ, to find so much evidence that angels have friendly communion with us here, and therefore we shall have communion with them hereafter. (Psalm xxxiv. 7, and xci. 11, 12; Luke xv. 10; 1 Cor. xi. 10; Heb. i. 14, and xii. 22, and xiii. 2; Matt. xviii. 10, and xxv. 31, and xiii. 39, 49; Acts v. 19, and viii. 26, and xii. 7, 23.) They have charge of us, and pitch their tents about us; they bear us up; they rejoice at our repentance; they are the regardful witnesses of our behaviour; they are ministering spirits for our good; they are our angels beholding the face of our heavenly Father. They will come with Christ in glorious attendance at the great and joyful day, and, as his executioners, they will separate the just from the unjust.

And it is not only the testimony of Scripture by which we know their communion with us, but also some degree of experience. Not only of old did they appear to the faithful as messengers from God, but of late times there have been testimonies of their ministration for us. Of which see *Zanchy de Angelis*, and Mr. J. Ambrose, of our communion with angels. Many a mercy doth God give us by their ministry, and they that are now so friendly to us, and suitable to our communion and help, and make up one society with us, do hereby greatly encourage us to hope that we are made for the same region, work, and company with these our blessed, loving friends. They were once in a life of trial, it seems, as we are now, though not on earth. (Jude 6; 2 Pet. ii. 4.) And they that overcame and are confirmed rejoice in our victory and confirmation. It is not an uninhabited world which is above us, nor such as is beyond our capacity and hope. We are come to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of the perfected just, who together have discreet quantity, or numerical difference, notwithstanding their happy union and communion.

Sec. 1. IX. And Satan himself, though unwillingly, hath

many ways helped my belief of our immortality and future hopes.

1. I have had many convincing proofs of witches, the contracts they have made with devils, and the power which they have received from them.* Beside the volumes of *Remigius* and *Bodin*, and the *Mallei Maleficorum*, *Danæus*, and others, we had many score of them detected, and many executed in one year in Suffolk and Essex, † about 1644. And I have at this present a flint-stone, which was one of about 160, which was voided by the urinary passage, by a bewitched child in Evesham, yet living, some of near an ounce weight, which was fully proved, the witch executed, and the child, upon her imprisonment, freed. To pass by many others.

Sect. 2. 2. And I have had convincing testimony of apparitions, besides that famous one, the devil of Mascon, and that in the shape of lieutenant-colonel Bowen, in Wales, mentioned elsewhere, and besides many ‡ testimonies of haunted houses, (however many, or most such reports, are but deceits).

Sect. 3. From both these I gather, 1. That there are individual inhabitants of the invisible world, and that spirits have their numerical differences, whatever unity is among them, and therefore we have reason to judge the same of separated souls. 2. That our souls are designed to future happiness or misery, which is implied in the foresaid contracts and endeavours of devils for our ruin. 3. That faith and holiness are the way of life, and unbelief and sin the way to misery, which also is in these implied.

Sect. 4. 3. And I have both read, and partly seen, convincing evidence, that there is such an exercise of diabolical power as we commonly call possession. Whether all, or most madmen are under such a power, as some think, I determine not, but that some are under it is evident. The motions of the body, which I have seen, seem beyond man's natural power. The telling of secrets and things absent, the speaking of languages never learned, the vomiting of nails, glass, hairs, &c., and other such effects, which the most learned, sober, impartial physicians profess to have seen, are credible testimonies.

Sect. 5. 4. And I have felt, and heard, and known from others, of such sorts of temptations, as show themselves to be

* Of this see the second edition, by Dr. More, of Mr. Glanvil's book of apparitions called *Atheismus Triumphatus*.

† For the truth of this read Mr. Fairclough's life.

‡ See what I have said of particular testimonies in my 'Saint's Rest,' and 'Unreasonableness of Infidelity.'

the acts of malicious spirits, enemies to mankind. The advantages that Satan taketh of a corrupted fancy, which hath once taken in such an image as may be his matter to work upon, is very remarkable. I have known a worthy, learned, pious person, who from his youth to old age, upon such an advantage, hath been so tempted, with pleasure, to torment himself, even his own flesh, as that for many years together, in a partial melancholy, at divers fits he was not able (though conscience also tormented him for it) to forbear. Many, by an immodest look or touch, have given Satan such a power upon their fancies, as no reason, conscience, or resolution could of a long time overcome. Few men, I think, that observe themselves, have not at some time had experience of such inward temptations, as show that the author of them is an invincible enemy. All which tells us, 1. That there are individual spirits. 2. Yea, devils that seek man's misery. 3. And that by the way of sin, and consequently that a future happiness or misery must be expected by us all.

Sect. 1. X. But the great and sure prognostics of our immortal happiness, is from the renewing operations of the Spirit of holiness on the soul. 1. That such a renewing work there is, all true believers in some measure feel. 2. And that it is the earnest of heaven, is proved thus.

Sect. 2. 1. If it be a change of greatest benefit to man. 2. And if heaven be the very sum and end of it. 3. And if it overcome all fleshly, worldly opposition. 4. And can be wrought by none but God. 5. And was before promised by Jesus Christ to all sound believers. 6. And is universally wrought in them all, either only, or eminently above all others. 7. And was promised them as a pledge and earnest of glory; then it can be no less than such a pledge and earnest; but the former are all true, &c.

Sect. 3. 1. That the change is of grand importance unto man, appeareth in that it is the renovation of his mind, and will, and life. It repaireth his depraved faculties, it causeth man to live as man, who is degenerated to a life too like to brutes. By God's permitting many to live in blindness, wickedness, and confusion, and to be tormenters of themselves and one another, by temptations, injuries, wars, and cruelty, we the fuller see what it is that grace doth save men from, and what a difference it maketh in the world. Those that have lived unholy in their youth, do easily find the difference in themselves when

they are renewed. But to them that have been piously inclined from their childhood, it is harder to discern the difference, unless they mark the case of others. If man be worth any thing, it is for the use that his faculties were made, and if he be not good for the knowledge, love, and service of his Creator, what is he good for? And certainly the generality of ungodly worldlings are undisposed to all such works as this, till the Spirit of Christ effectually change them. Men are slaves to sin till Christ thus make them free. (John viii. 32, 33, 36; Rom. vi. 18; Acts xxvi. 18; Rom. viii. 2.) But where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (2 Cor. iii. 17.) If the divine nature and image, and the love of God shed abroad on the heart, be not our excellency, health, and beauty, what is? And that which is born of the flesh, is flesh, but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (John iii. 6.) Without Christ and his Spirit, we can do nothing. Our dead notions and reason, when we see the truth, have not power to overcome temptations, nor to raise up man's soul to its original and end, nor to possess us with the love and joyful hopes of future blessedness. It were better for us to have no souls, than that those souls should be void of the Spirit of God.

Sect. 4. 2. And that heaven is the sum and end of all the Spirit's operations, appeareth in all that are truly conscious of them in themselves, and to them and others by all God's precepts, which the Spirit causeth us to obey, and the doctrine which it causeth us to believe, and by the description of all God's graces which he worketh in us. What is our knowledge and faith, but our knowledge and belief of heaven, as consisting in the glory and love of God there manifested, and as purchased by Christ, and given by his covenant? What is our hope but the hope of glory. (See Heb. xi. 1, and throughout; 1 Pet. i. 3, 21; Heb. vi. 11, 18, 19, and iii. 6; Tit. ii. 13, and iii. 7; Col. i. 5, 23, 27.) And through the Spirit, we wait for all this hope. (Gal. v. 5.) What is our love but a desire of communion with the blessed God initially here, and perfectly hereafter? As the sum of Christ's gospel was, "Take up the cross, forsake all here, and follow me, and thou shalt have a reward in heaven." (Luke xiv. 26, 33, and xviii. 22, 23.) And the consolation of his gospel is, "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." (Matt. v. 11, 12.) So the same is the sum of his Spirit's operations, for what he teacheth and commandeth that he worketh. For he worketh by that word, and the

impress must be like the signet, what arm soever set it on. He sendeth not his Spirit to make men craftier than others for this world, but to make them wiser for salvation, and to make them more heavenly and holy. For the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. Heavenliness is the Spirit's special work.

Sect. 5. 3. And in working this it conquereth the inward undisposedness and averseness of a fleshly, worldly mind and will, and the customs of a carnal life; and the outward temptations of Satan, and all the allurements of the world. Christ first overcame the world, and teacheth and causeth us to overcome it; even its flatteries and its frowns: our faith is our victory. Whether this victory be easy, and any honour to the Spirit of Christ, let our experience of the wickedness of the ungodly world, and of our own weakness, and of our falls when the Spirit of God forsaketh us, be our informer.

Sect. 6. 4. And that none but God can do this work on the soul of man, both the knowledge of causes and experience prove. The most learned, wise, and holy teachers cannot (as they confess and show); the wisest and most loving parents cannot, and therefore must pray to him that can; the greatest princes cannot; evil angels neither can nor will. What good angels can do on the heart we know not; but we know that they do nothing, but as the obedient ministers of God. And (though we have some power on ourselves, yet) that we ourselves cannot do it: that we cannot quicken, illuminate, or sanctify ourselves, and that we have nothing but what we have received, conscience and experience fully tell us.

Sect. 7. 5. And that Christ promised this Spirit in a special measure to all true believers, that it should be in them his advocate, agent, seal, and mark, is yet visible in the gospel; yea, and in the former prophets. (Isa. xlv. 34; Ezek. xxxvi. 26, and xxxvii. 14; Joel ii. 28, 29; Ezek. xi. 19, and xviii. 31; Eph. i. 13; John iii. 5, and iv. 23, 24, and vi. 63, and vii. 39; John i. 33, and xiv. 16, 26; Acts i. 5, 8; John xv. 26, and xvi. 7—9, &c.) Indeed the Spirit here, and heaven hereafter, are the chief of all the promises of Christ.

Sect. 8. 6. And that this Spirit is given (not to hypocrites that abuse Christ, and do not seriously believe him, nor to mere pretending, nominal Christians, but) to all that sincerely believe the gospel, is evident not only to themselves in certainty, (if they are in a condition to know themselves,) but to others in

part by the effects: they have other ends, other affections, other lives, than the rest of mankind have; though their heavenly nature and design be the less discerned and honoured in the world, because their chiefest difference is out of the sight of man, in the heart, and in their secret actions, and because their imperfections blemish them, and because the malignant world is by strangeness and enmity an incompetent judge, yet it is discernible to others, that they live upon the hopes of a better life, and their heavenly interest is it that over-ruleth all the adverse interests of this world, and that in order thereunto they live under the conduct of divine authority, and that God's will is highest and most prevalent with them, and that to obey and please him as far as they know it is the greatest business of their lives, though ignorance and adverse flesh do make their holiness and obedience imperfect. The universal noise and opposition of the world against them, do show that men discern a very great difference, which error, and cross interests, and carnal inclinations, render displeasing to those who find them condemned by their heavenly designs and conversations.

Sect. 9. But whether others discern it, or deny it, or detest it, the true believer is conscious of it in himself: even when he groaneth to be better, to believe, and trust, and love God more, and to have more of the heavenly life and comforts, those very desires signify another appetite and mind, than worldlings have; and even when his frailties and weaknesses make him doubt of his own sincerity, he would not change his governor, rule, or hopes, for all that the world can offer him. He hath the witness in himself, that there is in believers a sanctifying Spirit, calling up their minds to God and glory, and warring victoriously against the flesh; (1 John v. 9—11; Gal. v. 17; Rom. vii.; Phil. iii. 7—15;) so that to will is present with them; and they love and delight in a holy conformity to their rule, and it is never so well and pleasant with them, as when they can trust and love God most; and in their worst and weakest condition, they would fain be perfect. This Spirit, and its renewing work, so greatly different from the temper and desires of worldly men, is given by Christ to all sound believers.

Sect. 10. It is true, that some that know not of an incarnate Saviour, have much in them that is very laudable; whether it be real saving holiness, and whether Abraham were erroneous in thinking that even the Sodoms of the world were likely to have had fifty righteous persons in them, I am not now to inquire:

but it is sure, 1. That the world had really a Saviour, about four thousand years before Christ's incarnation; even the God of pardoning mercy, who promised and undertook what after was performed, and shall be to the end. 2. And that the Spirit of this Saviour did sanctify God's elect from the beginning; and gave them the same holy and heavenly dispositions (in some degree) before Christ's incarnation, as is given since; yea, it is called "The Spirit of Christ," which was before given. (1 Pet. i. 11, 3.) That this Spirit was then given to more than the Jews. 4. That Christ hath put that part of the world that hear not of his incarnation into no worse a condition than he found them in: that as the Jews' covenant of peculiarity was no repeal of the universal law of grace, made by God with fallen mankind, in Adam and Noah; so the covenant of grace of the second edition, made with Christ's peculiar people, is no repeal of the foresaid law in the first edition, to them that hear not of the second. 5. That all that wisdom and goodness, that is in any without the christian church, is the work of the Spirit of the Redeemer; as the light which goeth before sun-rising, and after sun-setting, and in a cloudy day, is of the same sun which others see, even to them that see not the sun itself. 6. That the liker any without the church are to the sanctified believers, the better they are, and the more unlike the worse; so that all these six things being undeniable, it appeareth, that it is the same Spirit of Christ, which now giveth all men what real goodness is any where to be found. But it is notorious that no part of the world is, in heavenliness and virtue, comparable to true and serious Christians.

Sect. 11. 7. And let it be added, that Christ, (Eph. i. 14; 2 Cor. i. 22, and v. 5.; Rom. viii. 23; 2 Tim. ii. 19; Eph. i. 13, and iv. 30; 1 John v. 9, 10; Heb. x. 15,) who promised the greatest measures of the Spirit, (which he accordingly hath given,) did expressly promise this, as a means and pledge, first-fruits, and earnest, of the heavenly glory: and, therefore, it is a certain proof, that such a glory we shall have. He that can and doth give us a spiritual change or renovation, which in its nature and tendency is heavenly, and sets our hopes and hearts on heaven, and turneth the endeavours of our lives to the seeking of a future blessedness, and told us, before-hand, that he would give us this preparatory grace, as the earnest of that felicity, may well be trusted to perform his word in our actual glorification.

Sect. 12. And now, O weak and fearful soul! why shouldest thou draw back, as if the case were yet left doubtful? Is not thy foundation firm? Is not the way of life, through the valley of death, made safe by him that conquereth death? Art thou not yet delivered from the bondage of thy fears, when the gaoler and executioner, who had the power of death, hath, by Christ, been put out of his power, as to thee? Is not all this evidence true and sure? Hast thou not the witness in thyself? Hast thou not found the motions, the effectual operations, the renewing changes, of this spirit in thee, long ago? And is he not still the agent and witness of Christ, residing and operating in thee? Whence else are thy groanings after God; thy desires to be nearer to his glory; to know him better; to love him more? Whence came all the pleasure thou hast had in his sacred truth, and ways, and service? Who else overcame thy folly, and pride, and vain desires, so far as they are overcome? Who made it thy choice to sit at the feet of Christ, and hear his word, as the better part, and to despise the honours and preferments of the world, and to account them all as dung and dross? Who breathed in thee all those requests that thou hast sent up to God? Overvalue not corrupted nature, it bringeth not forth such fruits as these: if thou doubt of that, remember what thou wast in the hour of temptation, even of poor and weak temptations. And how small a matter hath drawn thee to sin, when God did but leave thee to thyself. Forget not the days of youthful vanity: overlook not the case of the miserable world, even of thy sinful neighbours, who, in the midst of light still live in darkness, and hear not the loudest calls of God: look about on thousands that, in the same land, and under the same teaching, and after the greatest judgments and deliverance, run on to all excess of riot, and, as past feeling, as greedily vicious and unclean. Is it no work of Christ's Spirit that hath made thee to differ? Thou hast nothing to boast of, and much to be humbled for; but thou hast also much to be thankful for. Thy holy desires are, alas! too weak; but they are holy: thy love hath been too cold; but it is holiness, and the most holy God, that thou hast loved. Thy hopes in God have been too low; but it is God thou hast hoped in, and his love and glory that thou hast hoped for. Thy prayers have been too dull and interrupted; but it is holiness and heaven that thou hast most prayed for. Thy labours and endeavours have been too slothful; but it is God, and glory, and the good

of mankind, that thou hast laboured for. Though thy motion were too weak and slow, it hath been Godward ; and, therefore, it was from God. O bless the Lord, that hath not only given thee a word that beareth the image of God, and is sealed by uncontrolled miracles, to be the matter of thy belief, but hath also fulfilled his promises so oft and notably to thee, in the answer of prayers, and in great and convincing deliverances of thyself and many others ; and hath, by wonders, oft assisted thy faith ! Bless that God of light and love, who, besides the universal attestation of his word, long ago given to all the church, hath given thee the internal seal, the nearer in-dwelling attestation, the effects of power, light, and love, imprinted on thy nature, mind, and will, the witness in thyself, that the word of God is not a human dream, or lifeless thing ; that by regeneration hath been here preparing thee for the light of glory, as by generation he prepared thee to see this light, and converse with men. And wilt thou yet doubt and fear against all this evidence, experience, and foretaste ?

Sect. 13. I think it not needless labour to confirm my soul in the full persuasion of the truth of its own immortal nature, and of a future life of joy or misery to mankind, and of the certain truth of the christian faith ; the being of God, and his perfection, hath so great evidence, that I find no great temptation to doubt of it, any more than whether there be an earth, or a sun ; and the atheist seemeth to me to be in that no better than mad. The christian verity is known only by supernatural revelation ; but by such revelation it is so attested externally to the world, and internally to holy souls, as maketh faith the ruling, victorious, consolatory principle, by which we must live, and not by sight ; but the soul's immortality and reward hereafter is of a middle nature, viz., of natural revelation, but incomparably less clear than the being of a God ; and therefore, by the addition of evangelical (supernatural) revelation, is made to us much more clear and sure. And I find among the infidels of this age, that most who deny the christian verity, do almost as much deny or question the retribution of a future life. And they that are fully satisfied of this, do find Christianity so excellently congruous to it, as greatly facilitateth the work of faith. Therefore, I think, that there is scarce any verity more needful to be thoroughly digested into a full assurance, than this of the soul's immortality, and hope of future happiness.

Sect. 14. And when I consider the great unlikeness of men's hearts and lives to such a belief, as we all profess, I cannot but fear, that not only the ungodly, but most that truly hope for glory, have a far weaker belief (in habit and act) of the soul's immortality, and the truth of the gospel, than they seem to take notice of in themselves. Can I be certain, or fully persuaded, (in habit and act) of the future rewards and punishments of souls, and that we shall be all shortly judged, as we have lived here, and yet not despise all the vanities of this world, and set my heart, with resolution and diligence, to the preparation which must be made by a holy, heavenly, fruitful life, as one whose soul is taken up with the hopes and fears of things of such unspeakable importance. Who could stand dallying, as most men do, at the door of eternity, that did verily believe his immortal soul must be shortly there? Though such an one had no certainty of his own particular title to salvation, the certainty of such a grand concernment (that joy or misery is at hand) would surely awaken him to try, cry, or search; to beg, to strive, to watch, to spare no care, or cost, or labour, to make all sure in a matter of such weight; it could not be but he would do it with speed, and do it with a full resolved soul, and do it with earnest zeal and diligence. What man, that once saw the things which we hear of, even heaven and hell, would not afterwards, (at least in deep regard and seriousness,) exceed the most resolved believer that you know. One would think, in reason, it should be so thought: I confess a wicked heart is very senseless.

Sect. 15. I do confess, that there is much weakness of the belief of things unseen, where yet there is sincerity; but surely there will be some proportion between our belief and its effects. And where there is little regard, or fear, or hopes, or sorrow, or joy, or resolved diligence, for the world to come, I must think that there is (in act at least) but little belief of it, and that such persons little know themselves, how much they secretly doubt, whether it be true. I know that most complain, almost altogether, of the uncertainty of their title to salvation, and little of their uncertainty of a heaven and hell; but were they more certain of this, and truly persuaded of it at the heart, it would do more to bring them to that serious, resolved faithfulness in religion, which would help them more easily to be sure of their sincerity, than long examinations, and many marks talked of, without this, will do.

Sect. 16. And I confess, that the great wisdom of God hath not thought meet, that in the body we should have as clear, and sensible, and lively apprehensions of heaven and hell, as sight would cause. For that would be to have too much of heaven or hell on earth; for the gust would follow the perception, and so full a sense would be some sort of a possession, which we are not fit for in this world. And, therefore, it must be a darker revelation than sight would be, that it may be a lower perception, lest this world and the next should be confounded; and faith and reason should be put out of office, and not duly tried, exercised, and fitted for reward; but yet faith is faith, and knowledge is knowledge; and he that verily believeth such great, transcendent things, though he see them not, will have some proportionable affections and endeavours.

Sect. 17. I confess also, that man's soul, in flesh, is not fit to bear so deep a sense of heaven and hell as sight would cause; because it here operateth on and with the body, and according to its capacity, which cannot bear so deep a sense without distraction, by screwing up the organs too high, till they break, and so overdoing, would undo all; but yet there is an overruling seriousness, which a certain belief of future things must needs bring the soul to, that truly hath it: and he that is careful and serious for this world, and looketh after a better, but with a slight, unwilling, half-regard, and, in the second place, must give me leave to think, that he believeth but as he liveth, and that his doubting, or unbelief, of the reality of a heaven and hell, is greater than his belief.

Sect. 18. O, then, for what should my soul more pray, than for a clearer, and stronger faith? I believe, Lord, help my unbelief! I have many a thousand times groaned to thee under the burden of this remnant of darkness and unbelief; I have many a thousand times thought of the evidences of the christian verity, and of the great necessity of a lively, powerful, active faith: I have begged it; I have cried to thee night and day, Lord increase my faith! I have written and spoken that to others which might be most useful to myself, to raise the apprehensions of faith yet higher, and make them liker those of sense; but yet, yet Lord, how dark is this world! What a dungeon is this flesh! How little clearer is my sight, and little quicker are my perceptions, of unseen things, than long ago! Am I at the highest that man on earth can reach, and that when I am so dark and low? Is there no growth of these

apprehensions more to be expected? Doth the soul cease its increase in vigorous perception, when the body ceaseth its increase, or vigour, of sensation? Must I sit down in so low a measure, while I am drawing nearer to the things believed; and am almost there, where belief must pass into sight and love? Or must I take up with the passive silence and inactivity, which some friars persuade us is nearer to perfection; and, under pretence of annihilation and receptivity, let my sluggish heart alone, and say, that in this neglect I wait for thy operations? O let not a soul, that is driven from this world, and weary of vanity, and can think of little else but immortality, that seeks and cries both night and day for the heavenly light, and fain would have some foretaste of glory, and some more of the first-fruits of the promised joys, let not such a soul either long, or cry, or strive in vain! Punish not my former grieving of thy Spirit, by deserting a soul that crieth for thy grace, so near its great and inconceivable change. Let me not languish in vain desires, at the door of hope; nor pass with doubtful thoughts and fears, from this vale of misery. Which should be the season of triumphant faith, and hope, and joy, if not when I am entering on the world of joy? O thou that hast left us so many consolatory words of promise, that our joy may be full; send, oh! send, the promised Comforter, without whose approaches and heavenly beams, when all is said, and a thousand thoughts and strivings have been assayed, it will still be night and winter with the soul.

Sect. 19. But have I not expected more particular and more sensitive conceptions of heaven, and the state of blessed souls, than I should have done, and remained less satisfied, because I expected such distinct perceptions to my satisfaction, which God doth not ordinarily give to souls in flesh? I fear it hath been too much so; a distrust of God, and a distrustful desire to know much (good and evil) for ourselves, as necessary to our quiet and satisfaction, was that sin which hath deeply corrupted man's nature, and is more of our common pravity, than is commonly observed; I find that this distrust of God, and my Redeemer, hath had too great a hand in my desires of a distincter and more sensible knowledge. I know that I should implicitly, and absolutely, and quietly, trust my soul into my Redeemer's hands; (of which I must speak more anon;) and it is not only for the body, but also for the soul, that a distrustful care is our great sin and misery. But yet we must desire that

our knowledge and belief may be as distinct and particular as God's revelations are; and we can love no further than we know; and the more we know of God and glory, the more we shall love, desire, and trust him. It is a known, and not merely an unknown God and happiness, that the soul doth joyfully desire; and if I may not be ambitious of too sensible and distinct perceptions here, of the things unseen; yet must I desire and beg the most fervent and sensible love to them that I am capable of. I am willing (in part) to take up with that unavoidable ignorance, and that low degree of such knowledge, which God confineth us to in the flesh, so be it he will give me but such consolatory foretastes in love and joy, which such a general, imperfect knowledge may consist with, that my soul may not pass with distrust and terror, but with suitable, triumphant hopes to the everlasting pleasures.

O Father of lights! who givest wisdom to them that ask it of thee, shut not up this sinful soul in darkness! leave me not to grope in unsatisfied doubts, at the door of the celestial light! or, if my knowledge must be general, let it be clear and powerful; and deny me not now the lively exercise of faith, hope, and love, which are the stirrings of the new creature, and the dawns of the everlasting light, and the earnest of the promised inheritance.

Sect. 20. But we are oft ready to say, with Cicero, when he had been reading such as Plato, that, while the book is in our hands, we seem confident of our immortality, and when we lay it by, our doubts return; so our arguments seem clear and cogent, and yet when we think not of them with the best advantage, we are oft surprised with fear, lest we should be mistaken, and our hopes be vain; and hereupon (and from the common fear of death, that even good men too often manifest) the infidels gather, that we do but force ourselves into such a hope as we desire to be true, against the tendency of man's nature, and that we were not made for a better world.

Sect. 21. But this fallacy ariseth from men's not distinguishing, 1. Sensitive fears from rational uncertainty, or doubts. 2. And the mind that is in the darkness of unbelief, from that which hath the light of faith.

I find in myself too much of fear, when I look into eternity, interrupting and weakening my desires and joy. But I find that it is very much an irrational, sensitive fear, which the darkness of man's mind, the greatness of the change, the dreadful

majesty of God, and man's natural averseness to die, do, in some degree, necessitate, even when reason is fully satisfied that such fears are consistent with certain safety. If I were bound with the strongest chains, or stood on the surest battlements, on the top of a castle or steeple, I could not possibly look down without fear, and such as would go near to overcome me; and yet I should be rationally sure that I am there fast and safe, and cannot fall. So is it with our prospect into the life to come: fear is oft a necessitated passion: when a man is certain of his safe foundation, it will violently rob him of the comfort of that certainty: yea, it is a passion that irrationally doth much to corrupt our reason itself, and would make us doubt because we fear, though we know not why: and a fearful man doth hardly trust his own apprehensions of his safety, but, among other fears, is still ready to fear lest he be deceived: like timorous, melancholy persons about their bodies, who are ready still to think that every little distemper is a mortal symptom, and that worse is still nearer them than they feel, and they hardly believe any words of hope.

Sect. 22. And Satan, knowing the power of these passions, and having easier access to the sensitive than to the intellective faculties, doth labour to get in at this backdoor, and to frighten poor souls into doubt and unbelief: and in timorous natures he doth it with too great success, as to the consolatory acts of faith. Though yet God's mercy is wonderfully seen in preserving many honest, tender souls from the damning part of unbelief, and, by their fears, preserveth them from being bold with sin: when many bold and impudent sinners turn infidels, or atheists, by forfeiting the helps of grace.

Sect. 23. And, indeed, irrational fears have so much power to raise doubts, that they are seldom separated; insomuch that many scarce know, or observe, the difference between doubts and fears: and many say they not only fear but doubt, when they can scarce tell why, as if it were no intellectual act which they meant, but an irrational passion.

Sect. 24. If, therefore, my soul see undeniable evidence of immortality; and if it be able, by irrefragable argument, to prove the future blessedness expected; and if it be convinced that God's promises are true, and sufficiently sealed and attested by him, to warrant the most confident belief; and if I trust my soul and all my hopes upon this word, and evidences of truth, it is not, then, our averseness to die, nor the sensible fears of a soul

that looketh into eternity, that invalidate any of the reasons of my hope, nor prove the unsoundness of my faith.

Sect. 25. But yet these fears do prove its weakness; and were they prevalent against the choice, obedience, resolutions, and endeavours of faith, they would be prevalent against the truth of faith, or prove its nullity; for faith is trust; and trust is a securing, quieting thing. "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" was a just reproof of Christ to his disciples, when sensible dangers raised up their fears. For the established will hath a political or imperfect, though not a despotical and absolute, power over our passions. And therefore our fears do show our unbelief, and stronger faith is the best means of conquering even irrational fears; "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted in me? trust in God," &c. (Psalm xlii.,) is a needful way of chiding a timorous heart.

Sect. 26. And though many say that faith hath not evidence, and think that it is an assent of the mind, merely commanded by the empire of the will, without a knowledge of the verity of the testimony; yet, certainly, the same assent is ordinarily in the Scriptures called, indifferently, knowing and believing: and, as a bare command, will not cause love, unless we perceive an amiableness in the object, so a bare command of the law, or of the will, cannot alone cause belief, unless we perceive a truth in the testimony believed: for it is a contradiction; or an act without its object. And truth is perceived only so far as it is some way evident: for evidence is nothing but the objective perceptibility of truth; or that which is metaphorically called light. So that we must say that faith hath not sensible evidence of the invisible things believed; but faith is nothing else but the willing perception of the evidence of truth in the word of the assertor, and a trust therein. We have, and must have, evidence that Scripture is God's word, and that his word is true, before, by any command of the word or will, we can believe it.

Sect. 27. I do, therefore, neither despise evidence as unnecessary, nor trust to it alone as the sufficient total cause of my belief: for if God's grace do not open mine eyes, and come down in power upon my will, and insinuate into it a sweet acquaintance with the things unseen, and a taste of their goodness to delight my soul, no reasons will serve to stablish and comfort me, how undeniable soever: reason is fain first to make use of notions, words, or signs; and to know terms, propositions, and

arguments, which are but means to the knowledge of things, is its first employment, and that, alas! which multitudes of learned men do take up with: but it is the illumination of God that must give us an effectual acquaintance with the things spiritual and invisible, which these notions signify, and to which our organical knowledge is but a means.

Sect. 28. To sum up all, that our hopes of heaven have a certain ground appeareth, I. From nature: II. From grace: III. From other works of gracious providence.

I. From the nature of man: 1. Made capable of it. 2. Obligated, even by the law of nature, to seek it before all. 3. Naturally desiring perfection, 1. Habitual: 2. Active: And, 3. Objective.

2. And from the nature of God. 1. As good and communicative. 2. As holy and righteous. 3. As wise; making none of his works in vain.

Sect. 29. II. From grace, 1. Purchasing it. 2. Declaring it by a messenger from heaven, both by word, and by Christ's own (and others') resurrection. 3. Promising it. 4. Sealing that promise by miracles there. 5. And by the work of sanctification, to the end of the world.

Sect. 30. III. By subordinate providence. 1. God's actual governing the world by the hopes and fears of another life. 2. The many helps which he giveth us for a heavenly life, and for attaining it (which are not vain). 3. Specially the ministration of angels, and their love to us, and communion with us. 4. And, by accident, devils themselves convince us. 1. By the nature of their temptations. 2. By apparitions, and haunting houses. 3. By witches. 4. By possessions; which though it be but a satanical operation on the body, yet is so extraordinary an operation, that it differeth from the more usual, as (if I may so compare them) God's Spirit's operations on the saints, that are called his dwelling in them, or possessing them, are different from his lower operations on others.

Sect. 1. II. Having proved that faith and hope have a certain, future happiness to expect, the text directeth me next to consider why it is described by "being with Christ;" viz. I. What is included in our "being with Christ." II. That we shall be with him. III. Why we shall be with him.

Sect. 2. To be with Christ, includeth, 1. Presence. 2. Union. 3. Communion, or participation of felicity with him.

Sect. 3. 1. Quest. Is it Christ's godhead, or his human soul, or his human body, that we shall be present with, and united to, or all? Answ. It is all, but variously.

Sect. 4. 1. We shall be present with the divine nature of Christ. Quest. But are we not always so? And are not all creatures so? Answ. Yes, as his essence comprehendeth all place and beings; but not as it is operative, and manifested in and by his glory. Christ directeth our hearts and tongues to pray "Our Father, which art in heaven:" and yet he knew that all place is in and with God; because it is in heaven that he gloriously operateth and shineth forth to holy souls: even as man's soul is eminently said to be in the head, because it understandeth and reasoneth in the head, and not in the foot, or hand, though it be also there. And as we look a man in the face when we talk to him, so we look up to heaven when we pray to God. God who is, and operateth as, the root of nature, in all the works of creation, (for in him, we live, and move, and are,) and by the way of grace in all the gracious, doth operate, and is, by the works and splendour of his glory, eminently in heaven: by which glory, therefore, we must mean some created glory: for his essence hath no inequality.

Sect. 5. 2. We shall be present with the human nature of Christ, both soul and body: but here our present narrow thoughts must not too boldly presume to resolve the difficulties which, to a distinct understanding of this, should be overcome: for we must not here expect any more than a dark and general knowledge of them: as, 1. What is the formal difference between Christ's glorified body, and his flesh on earth? 2. Where Christ's glorified body is, and how far it extendeth. 3. Wherein the soul and the glorified body differ, seeing it is called a spiritual body: these things are beyond our present reach.

Sect. 6. 1. For what conceptions can we have of a spiritual body, save that it is pure, incorruptible, invisible to mortal eyes, and fitted to the most perfect state of the soul? How near the nature of it is to a spirit, (and so to the soul,) and how far they agree, or differ, in substance, extensiveness, divisibility, or activity, little do we know.

Sect. 7. 2. Nor do we know where and how far Christ's body is present by extent. The sun is commonly taken for a body, and its motive, illuminative, and calefactive beams, are, by the most probable philosophy, taken to be a real emanant

part of its substance, and so that it is essentially as extensive as those beams; that is, it at once filleth all our air, and toucheth the surface of the earth; and how much further it extendeth we cannot tell. And what difference there is between Christ's glorified body and the sun, in purity, splendour, extent, or excellency of nature, little do poor mortals know: and so of the rest.

Sect. 8. Let no man, therefore, cavil, and say, 'How can a whole world of glorified bodies be all present with the one body of Christ, when each must possess its proper room?' for, as the body of the solar beams, and the extensive air, are so compressent, as that none can discern the difference of the places which they possess, and a world of bodies are present with them both, so may all our bodies be with Christ's body, and that without any real confusion.

Sect. 9. 2. Besides presence with Christ, there will be such an union as we cannot now distinctly know. A political, relative union is past doubt, such as subjects have in one kingdom with their king; but little know we how much more. We see that there is a wonderful, corporeal continuity, or contract, among the material works of God; and the more spiritual, pure, and noble, the more inclination each nature hath to union. Every plant on earth hath an union with the whole earth in which it liveth; they are the real parts of it. And what natural conjunction our bodies shall have to Christ's, and what influence from it, is past our knowledge. Though his similitudes in John xv. and vi., and Eph. v., and Cor. xii., seem to extend far, yet being but similitudes, we cannot fully know how far.

Sect. 10. The same, *variatis variandis*, we may say of our union with Christ's human soul. Seeing souls are more inclinable to union than bodies, when we see all vegetables to be united parts of one earth, and yet to have each one its proper individuating form and matter, we cannot, though animals seem to walk more disjunct, imagine that there is no kind of union or conjunction of invisible souls; though they retain their several substances and forms: nor yet that our bodies shall have a nearer union with Christ's body than our souls with his soul. But the nature, manner, and measure of it, we know not.

Sect. 11. Far be it from us to think that Christ's glorified, spiritual body, is such in forms, parts, and dimensions, as his earthly body was. That it hath hands, feet, brains, heart, stomach, liver, intestines, as on earth: or, that it is such a com-

pound of earth, water, and air, as here it was, and of such confined extent : for then, as his disciples and a few Jews only were present with him, and all the world besides were absent, and had none of his company, so it would be in heaven. But it is such as not only Paul, but all true believers in the world, from the creation to the end, shall be with Christ, and see his glory : and though inequality of fitness, or degrees of holiness, will make an inequality of glory, no man can prove an inequality, by local distance, from Christ ; or, if such there be, for it is beyond our reach, yet none in heaven are at such a distance from him as not to enjoy the felicity of his presence.

Sect. 12. Therefore, when we dispute against them that hold transubstantiation, and the ubiquity of Christ's body, we do assuredly conclude that sense is judge, whether there be real bread and wine present, or not ; but it is no judge, whether Christ's spiritual body be present or not, no more than whether an angel be present. And we conclude that Christ's body is not infinite, or immense, as is his godhead ; but what are its dimensions, limits, or extent, and where it is absent, far be it from us to determine, when we cannot tell how far the sun extendeth its secondary substance, or emanant beams ; nor well what locality is as to Christ's soul, or any spirit, if to a spiritual body.

Sect. 13. Their fear is vain and carnal, who are afraid lest their union with Christ, or one another, will be too near ; even lest thereby they lose their individuation, as rivers that fall into the sea, or extinguished candles, whose fire is after but a sunbeam, or part of the common element of fire in the air, or as the vegetative spirits which, in autumn, retire from the leaves into the branches and trunk of the tree. I have proved before, that our individuation, or numerical existence, ceaseth not ; and that no union is to be feared, were it never so sure, which destroyeth not the being, or formal powers, or action of the soul ; and that it is the great radical disease of selfishness, and want of holy love to God and our Saviour, and one another, which causeth these unreasonable fears, even that selfishness which now maketh men so partially desirous of their own wills and pleasure in comparison of God's, and their own felicity in comparison of others, and which maketh them so easily bear God's injuries, and the sufferings of a thousand others, in comparison of their own. But he that put a great desire of the body's preservation into the soul, while it is its form, will abate that desire when the

time of separation is come, because there is then no use for it till the resurrection; else it would be a torment to the soul.

Sect. 14. 3. And as we shall have union, so also communion, with the divine and human nature of Christ respectively; both as they will be the objects of our soul's most noble and constant acts, and as they will be the fountain or communicative cause of our receptions.

Sect. 15. 1. We find now that our various faculties have various objects, suitable to their natures. The objects of sense are things sensible, and the objects of imagination things imaginable, and the objects of intellection things intelligible, and the objects of the will things amiable. The eye, which is a nobler sense than some others, hath light for its object, which, to other senses, is none: and so of the rest. Therefore we have cause to suppose, that as far as our glorified souls and our spiritual, glorified bodies will differ, so far Christ's glorified soul and body will, respectively, be their several objects; and beholding the glory of both will be part of our glory.

Sect. 16. Yet is it not hence to be gathered, that the separated soul, before the resurrection, shall not have Christ's glorified body for its objects; for the objects of the body are also the objects of the soul, or, to speak more properly, the objects of sense are also the objects of intellection and will, though all the objects of the intellect and will are not objects of sense. The separated soul can know Christ's glorified body, though our present bodies cannot see a soul. But how much our spiritual bodies will excel in capacity and activity these passive bodies, that have so much earth and water, we cannot tell.

Sect. 17. And though now our souls are as a candle in a lantern, and must have extrinsic objects admitted by the senses before they can be understood, yet it followeth not that therefore a separated soul cannot know such objects: 1. Because it now knoweth them abstractively, per species, because its act of ratiocination is compound as to the cause (soul and body). But it will then know such things intuitively, as now it can do itself, when then the lantern is cast by. 2. And whatever many of late, that have given themselves the title of ingenious, have said to the contrary, we have little reason to think that the sensitive faculty is not an essential, inseparable power of the same soul that is intellectual, and that sensation ceaseth to separated souls, however the modes of it may cease with their several uses

and organs. To feel intellectually, or to understand, and will feelingly, we have cause to think, will be the action of separate souls: and if so, why may they not have communion with Christ's body and soul, as their objects in their separated state?

3. Besides that, we are uncertain whether the separated soul have no vehicle or body at all. Things unknown to us must not be supposed true or false. Some think that the sensitive soul is material, and, as a body to the intellectual, never separated. I am not of their opinion that make them two substances; but I cannot say I am certain that they err. Some think that the soul is material, of a purer substance than things visible, and that the common notion of its substantiality meaneth nothing else but a pure, (as they call it,) spiritual materiality. Thus thought not only Tertullian, but almost all the old Greek doctors of the church that write of it, and most of the Latin, or very many, as I have elsewhere showed, and as Faustus reciteth them in the treatise answered by Mammertus. Some think that the soul, as vegetative, is an igneous body, such as we call ether, or solar fire, or rather of a higher, purer kind; and that sensation and intellection are those formal faculties which specifically difference it from inferior mere fire, or ether. There were few of the old doctors that thought it not some of these ways material; and, consequently, extensive and divisible *per potentiam divinam*, though not naturally, or of its own inclination, because most strongly inclined to unity: and if any of all these uncertain opinions should prove true, the objections in hand will find no place. To say nothing of their conceit, who say, that as the spirit that retireth from the falling leaves in autumn, continueth to animate the tree, so man's soul may do when departed, with that to which it is united, to animate some more noble, universal body. But as all these are the too bold cogitations of men that had better let unknown things alone, so yet they may be mentioned to refel that more perilous boldness which denieth the soul's action, which is certain, upon, at best, uncertain reasons.

Sect. 18. I may boldly conclude, notwithstanding such objections, that Christ's divine and human nature, soul and body, shall be the felicitating objects of intuition and holy love to the separated soul before the resurrection; and that to be with Christ is to have such communion with him, and not only to be present where he is.

Sect. 19. 2. And the chief part of this communion will be that in which we are receptive; even Christ's communications to

the soul. And as the infinite, incomprehensible Deity is the root, or first cause, of all communication, natural, gracious, and glorious, to being, motion, life, rule, reason, holiness, and happiness; and the whole creation is more dependent on God, than the fruit on the tree, or the plants on the earth, or the members on the body; (though yet they are not parts of the Deity, nor deified, because the communication is creative;) so God useth second causes in his communication to inferior natures. And it is more than probable, that the human soul of Christ, primarily, and his body, secondarily, are the chief second cause of influence and communication both of grace and glory, both to man in the body, and to the separated soul. And as the sun is first an efficient, communicative, second cause of seeing to the eye, and then is also the object of our sight, so Christ is to the soul.* For as God, so the Lamb is the light and glory of the heavenly Jerusalem, and in his light we shall have light. Though he give up the kingdom to the Father, so far as that God shall be all in all, and his creature be fully restored to his favour, and there shall be need of a healing government no more, for the recovering of lapsed souls to God; yet sure he will not cease to be our Mediator, and to be the church's head, and to be the conveying cause of everlasting life, and light, and love, to all his members. As now we live because he liveth, even as the branches in the vine, and the Spirit that quickeneth, enlighteneth, and sanctifieth us, is first the Spirit of Christ before it is ours, and is communicated from God, by him, to us; so will it be in the state of glory, for we shall have our union and communion with him perfected, and not destroyed, or diminished. And unless I could be so proud as to think that I am, or shall be, the most excellent of all the creatures of God, and therefore nearest him, and above all others, how could I think that I am under the influence of no second cause, but have either grace or glory from God alone?

Sect. 20. So far am I from such arrogancy, as to think I shall be so near to God, as to be above the need and use of Christ and his communications, as that I dare not say that I shall be above the need and help of other subordinate causes;

* This one truth will give great light into the controversies about God's gracious operations on the soul; for when he useth second causes, we see he operateth according to their limited aptitude; and Christ's human nature, and all other second causes, are limited, and operate variously and resistibly, according to the recipient's capacity.

as I am now lower than angels, and need their help, and as I am under the government of my superiors, and, as a poor weak member, am little worth in comparison of the whole body, the church of Christ, and receive continual help from the whole, so, how far it will be thus in glory, I know not; but that God will still use second causes for our joy, I doubt not, and also that there will not be an equality; and that it will be consistent with God's all-sufficiency to us, and our felicity in him, that we shall for ever have use for one another, and that to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, and to be in Abraham's bosom, and sit at Christ's right and left hand, in his kingdom, and to be ruler over ten cities, and to join with the heavenly host, or choir, in the joyful love and praise of God, and of the Lamb, and many such like, are not false nor useless notes and notions of our celestial glory.

Sect. 21. And, certainly, if I be with Christ, I shall be with all that are with Christ; even with all the heavenly society. Though these bodies of gross, passive matter must have so much room, that the earth is little enough for all its inhabitants; and those at the antipodes are almost as strange to us as if they were in another world; and those of another kingdom, another province, or county, and oft another parish, yea, another house, are strangers to us; so narrow is our capacity of communion here. Yet we have great cause to think, by many Scripture expressions, that our heavenly union and communion will be nearer, and more extensive; and that all the glorified shall know each other, or, at least, be far less distant, and less strange, than now we are. As I said before, when I see how far the sunbeams do extend, how they penetrate our closest glass, and puzzle them that say that all bodies are impenetrable; when I see how little they hinder the placing or presence of other creatures, and how intimately they mix themselves with all, and seem to possess the whole region of the air, when yet the air seemeth itself to fill it, &c., I dare not think that glorified spirits, (no, nor spiritual bodies,) will be such strangers to one another, as we are here on earth.

Sect. 22. And I must needs say, that it is a pleasant thought to me, and greatly helpeth my willingness to die, to think that I shall go to all the holy ones, both Christ and angels, and departed, blessed souls. For, 1. God hath convinced me that they are better than I (each singly), and therefore more amiable than myself. 2. And that many are better than one, and the whole than a poor, sinful part, and the New Jerusalem is the glory of

the creation. 3. God hath given me a love to all his holy ones, as such. 4. And a love to the work of love and praise, which they continually and perfectly perform to God. 5. And a love to the celestial Jerusalem, as it is complete, and to his glory shining in them. 6. And my old acquaintance, with many a holy person gone to Christ, doth make my thoughts of heaven the more familiar to me. O, how many of them could I name! 7. And it is no small encouragement to one that is to enter upon an unseen world, to think that he goeth not an untrodden path, nor enters into a solitary or singular state; but followeth all from the creation to this day, that have passed by death to endless life. And is it not an emboldening consideration, to think that I am to go no other way, nor to no other place or state, than all the believers and saints have gone to before me, from the beginning to this time? Of this more anon.

TO DEPART.

Sect. 1. But I must be loosed, or depart, before I can thus be with Christ. And I must here consider, I. From what I must depart. II. And how, or in what manner: and I must not refuse to know the worst.

Sect. 2. I. And, 1. I know that I must depart from this body itself, and the life which consisteth in the animating of it. These eyes must here see no more; this hand must move no more; these feet must walk no more; this tongue must speak no more. As much as I have loved and over-loved this body, I must leave it to the grave. There must it lie and rot in darkness, as a neglected and a loathed thing.

Sect. 3. This is the fruit of sin, and nature would not have it so: I mean the nature of this compound man; but what, though it be so? 1. It is but my shell, or tabernacle, and the clothing of my soul, and not itself. 2. It is but an elementary composition dissolved; and earth going to earth, and water to water, and air to air, and fire to fire, into that union which the elementary nature doth incline to.

3. It is but an instrument laid by when all its work is done, and a servant dismissed when his service is at an end. And what should I do with a horse, when I shall need to ride or travel no more, or with a pen, when I must write no more? It is but the laying by the passive receiver of my soul's operations, when the soul hath no more to do upon it; as I cast by my lute, or other instrument, when I have better employment than music to take up my time.

4. Or, at most, it is but as flowers die in the fall, and plants in winter, when the retiring spirits have done their work, and are undisposed to dwell in so cold and unmeet a habitation, as the season maketh their former matter then to be. And its retirement is not its annihilation, but its taking up a fitter place.

5. It is but a separation from a troublesome companion, and putting off a shoe that pinched me; many a sad and painful hour I have had in this frail and faltering flesh; many a weary night and day: what cares, what fears, what griefs, and what groans, hath this body cost me! Alas! how many hours of my precious time have been spent to maintain it, please it, or repair it! How considerable a part of all my life hath been spent in necessary sleep and rest; and how much in eating, drinking, dressing, physic; and how much in labouring, or using means, to procure these and other necessaries! Many a hundred times I have thought, that it costeth me so dear to live, yea, to live a painful, weary life, that were it not for the work and higher ends of life, I had little reason to be much in love with it, or to be loth to leave it. And had not God put into our nature itself a necessary, unavoidable, sensitive love of the body, and of life, as he puts into the mother, and into every brute, a love of their young ones, how unclean, and impotent, and troublesome soever, for the propagation and continuance of man on earth? Had God but left it to mere reason, without this necessary pre-engagement of our natures, it would have been a matter of more doubt and difficulty than it is, whether this life should be loved and desired; and no small number would daily wish that they had never been born: a wish that I have had much ado to forbear, even when I have known that it is sinful, and when the work and pleasure of my life have been such to overcome the evils of it as few have had.

6. Yea, to depart from such a body, is but to be removed from a foul, uncleanly, and sordid habitation. I know that the body of man and brutes is the curious, wonderful work of God, and not to be despised, nor injuriously dishonoured, but admired, and well used; but yet it is a wonder to our reason, that so noble a spirit should be so meanly housed; and we may call it "our vile body," as the apostle doth. (Phil. iii. 21.) It is made up of the airy, watery, and earthly parts of our daily food, subacted and actuated by the fiery part, as the instrument of the soul. The greater part of the same food which, with great cost, and pomp, and pleasure, is first upon our tables, and then in our mouths, to-

day, is to-morrow a fœtid, loathsome excrement, and cast out into the draught, that the sight and smell of that annoy us not, which yesterday was the sumptuous fruit of our abundance, and the glory of that which is called great housekeeping, and the pleasure of our eyes and taste. And is not the rest that turneth into blood and flesh, of the same general kind with that which is turned into loathsome filth? The difference is, that it is fitter for the soul by the fiery spirits, yet longer to operate on and keep from corruption; our blood and flesh are as stinking and loathsome a substance as our filthiest excrements, save that they are longer kept from putrefaction. Why then should it more grieve me, that one part of my food, which turneth into flesh, should rot and stink in the grave, than that all the rest should daily stink in the draught? Yea, while it is within me, were it not covered from my sight, what a loathsome mass would my intestines appear! If I saw what is in the guts, the mesentery, the ventricles of the brain, what filth, what bilious or mucous matter, and, perhaps, crawling worms, there are in the most proud or comely person, I should think that the cover of a cleaner skin, and the borrowed ornaments of apparel, make no great difference between such a body and a carcass (which may be also covered with an adorned coffin and monument, to deceive such spectators as see but outsides); the change is not so great of corruptible flesh, replete with such fœtid excrements, into corrupted flesh, as some fools imagine.

7. Yet more: to depart from such a body is but to be loosed from the bondage of corruption, and from a clog and prison of the soul. I say not that God put a pre-existent soul into this prison penally, for former faults; I must say no more than I can prove, or than I know; but that body which was an apt servant to innocent man's soul, is become as a prison to him now; what alteration sin made upon the nature of the body, as whether it be more terrene and gross than else it would have been, I have no reason to assert: of earth or dust it was at first, and to dust it is sentenced to return. But no doubt but it hath its part in that dispositive deprivation which is the fruit of sin. We find that the soul, as sensitive, is so imprisoned, or shut up, in flesh, that sometimes it is more than one door that must be opened before the object and the faculty can meet. In the eye, indeed, the soul seemeth to have a window to look out at, and to be almost itself visible to others; and yet there are many interposing tunicles, and a suffusion, or winking, can make the

clearest sight to be as useless for the time as if it were none ; and if sense be thus shut up from its object, no wonder if reason also be under difficulties from corporeal impediments ; and if the soul that is yoked with such a body can go no faster than its heavy pace.

8. Yet further : to depart from such a body, is but to be separated from an accidental enemy, and one of our greatest and most hurtful enemies ; though still we say, that it is not by any default in the work of our Creator, but by the effects of sin, that it is such ; what could Satan, or any other enemy of our souls, have done against us without our flesh ? What is it but the interest of this body, that standeth in competition against the interest of our souls and God ? What else do the profane sell their heavenly inheritance for, as Esau his birthright ? No man loveth evil, as evil, but as some way a real or seeming good ; and what good is it but that which seemeth good for the body ? What else is the bait of ambition, covetousness, and sensuality, but the interest and pleasure of this flesh ? What taketh up the thoughts and care which we should lay out upon things spiritual and heavenly, but this body and its life ? What pleasures are they that steal away men's hearts from the heavenly pleasures of faith, hope, and love, but the pleasures of this flesh ? This draweth us to sin ; this hindereth us from and in our duty. This body hath its interest which must be minded, and its inordinate appetite which must be pleased ; or else what murmurings and disquiet must we expect. Were it not for bodily interest, and its temptations, how much more innocently and holily might I live ! I should have nothing to care for, but to please God, and to be pleased in him, were it not for the care of this bodily life. What employment should my will and love have, but to delight in God, and love him and his interest, were it not for the love of the body, and its concerns ? By this the mind is darkened, and the thoughts diverted ; by this our wills are perverted and corrupted, and, by loving things corporeal, contract a strangeness and aversion from things spiritual ; by this, heart and time are alienated from God ; our guilt is increased, and our heavenly desire and hopes destroyed ; life made unholy and uncomfortable, and death made terrible ; God and our souls separated, and life eternal set by, and in danger of being utterly lost. I know that it is the sinful soul that is in all this the chief cause and agent ; but what is it but bodily interest that is its temptation, bait, and end ? What but the body, and its life, and its

pleasure, is the chief, objective, alluring cause of all this sin and misery? And shall I take such a body to be better than heaven, or be loth to be loosed from so troublesome a yoke-fellow, or to be separated from so burdensome and dangerous a companion?

Sect. 3. Obj. But I know this habitation, but the next I know not. I have long been acquainted with this body, and this world, but the next I am unacquainted with.

Ans. 1. If you know it, you know all that of it which I have mentioned before; you know it to be a burden and snare; I am sure I know, by long experience, that this flesh hath been a painful lodging to my soul, and this world as a tumultuous ocean, or like the uncertain and stormy region of the air. And well he deserveth bondage, pain, and enmity, who will love them because he is acquainted with them, and is loth to leave them because he hath had them long, and is afraid of being well because he hath been long sick.

2. And do you not know the next and better habitation? Is faith no knowledge? If you believe God's promise, you know that such a state there is; and you know, in general, that it is better than this world; and you know that we shall be in holiness and glorious happiness with Christ: and is this no knowledge? 3. And what we know not, Christ, that prepareth and promiseth it, doth know; and is that nothing to us, if really we trust our souls to him? He that knoweth not more good by heaven than by earth is yet so earthly and unbelieving, that it is no wonder if he be afraid and unwilling to depart.

Sect. 4. II. In departing from this body and life, I must depart from all its ancient pleasures: I must taste no more sweetness in meat, or drink, or rest, or sport, or any such thing, that now delighteth me; house and lands, and goods, and wealth, must all be left; and the place where I live must know me no more. All my possessions must be no more to me, nor all that I laboured for, or took delight in, than if they had never been at all.

And what though it must be so? Consider, O my soul! 1. Thy ancient pleasures are all past already; thou lovest none of them by death, for they are all lost before, if immortal grace have not, by sanctifying them, made the benefits of them to become immortal. All the sweet draughts, and morsels, and sports, and laughers; all the sweet thoughts of thy worldly possessions, or thy hopes, that ever thou hadst till this present

hour, are passed by, dead, and gone already. All that death doth to such as these is, to prevent such, that on earth thou shalt have no more.

2. And is not that the case of every brute, that hath no comfort from the prospect of another life, to repair his loss; and yet as our dominion diminisheth their pleasure while they live, by our keeping them under fear and labour, so, at our will, their lives must end. To please a gentleman's appetite for half an hour, or less, birds, beasts, and fishes, must lose life itself, and all the pleasure which light might have afforded them for many years; yea, perhaps many of these (birds and fishes at least) must die to become but one feast to a rich man, if not one ordinary meal. And is not their sensual pleasure of the same nature as ours? Meat is as sweet to them, and ease as welcome, and lust as strong (in season); and the pleasure that death depriveth our flesh of, is such as is common to man with brutes; why then should it seem hard to us to lose that in the course of nature, which our wills deprive them of at our pleasure? When, if we are believers, we can say, that we do but exchange these delights of life for the greater delights of a life with Christ, which is a comfort which our fellow creatures (the brutes) have not.

3. And, indeed, the pleasures of life are usually embittered with so much pain, that to a great part of the world doth seem to exceed them; the vanity and vexation is so great and grievous as the pleasure seldom countervaieth. It is true, that nature desireth life, even under sufferings that are but tolerable, rather than to die; but that is not so much from the sensible pleasure of life, as from mere natural inclination; which God hath laid so deep, that free-will hath no power against it. As before I said, that the body of man is such a thing, that could we see through the skin (as men may look through a glass hive upon the bees) and see all the parts and motion, the filth and excrements, that are in it, the soul would hardly be willing to actuate, love, and cherish such a mass of unclean matter, and to dwell in such a loathsome place, unless God had necessitated it by nature (deeper than reason or sense) to such a love and such a labour, by the *pondus* or spring of inclination; even as the cow would not else lick the unclean calf, nor women themselves be at so much labour and trouble with their children, while there is little of them to be pleasing, but uncleanness, and crying, and helpless impatency, to make them wearisome, had not necessitating in-

clination done more hereto than any other sense or reason ; even so I now say of the pleasure of living, that the sorrows are so much greater to multitudes than the sensible delight, that life would not be so commonly chosen and endured under so much trouble, were not men determined thereto by natural necessitating inclination ; (or deterred from death by the fears of misery to the separated soul ;) and yet all this kept not some, counted the best and wisest of the heathens, from taking it for the valour and wisdom of a man to make away his life in time of extremity, and from making this the great answer to them that grudge at God for making their lives so miserable, ' If the misery be greater than the good of life, why dost thou not end it ? Thou mayest do that when thou wilt.'

Our meat and drink is pleasant to the healthful, but it costeth poor men so much toil, and labour, and care, and trouble to procure a poor diet for themselves, and their families, that, I think, could they live without eating and drinking, they would thankfully exchange the pleasure of it all, to be eased of their care and toil in getting it. And when sickness cometh, even the pleasantest food is loathsome.

4. And do we not willingly interrupt and lay by these pleasures every night, when we betake ourselves to sleep ? It is possible, indeed, a man may then have pleasant dreams ; but I think few go to sleep for the pleasure of dreaming ; either no dreams, or vain, or troublesome dreams, are much more common. And to say that rest and ease is my pleasure, is but to say, that my daily labour and cares are so much greater than my waking pleasure, that I am glad to lay by both together. For what is ease but deliverance from weariness and pain ? For in deep and dreamless sleep there is little positive sense of the pleasure of rest itself. But, indeed, it is more from nature's necessitated inclination to this self-easing and repairing means, than from the positive pleasure of it, that we desire sleep. And if we can thus be contented every night to die, as it were, to all our waking pleasures, why should we be unwilling to die to them at once ?

5. If it be the inordinate pleasures forbidden of God, which you are loth to leave, those must be left before you die, or else it had been better for you never to have been born, yea, every wise and godly man doth cast them off with detestation. You must be against holiness on that account, as well as against death, and, indeed, the same cause which maketh men unwilling

to live a holy life, hath a great hand in making them unwilling to die, even because they are loth to leave the pleasure of sin. If the wicked be converted, he must be gluttonous and drunken no more; he must live in pride, vain-glory, worldliness, and sensual pleasures, no more, and therefore he draweth back from a holy life, as if it were from death itself. And so he is the lother to die, because he must have no more of the pleasures of his riches, pomp, and honours, his sports, and lust, and pleased appetite, for ever. But what is this to them that have mortified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof?

6. Yea, it is these forbidden pleasures which are the great impediments both of our holiness and our truest pleasures; and one of the reasons why God forbiddeth them, is, because they hinder us from better. And if for our own good we must forsake them when we turn to God, it must be supposed that they should be no reason against our willingness to die, but rather that to be free from the danger of them, we should be the more willing.

7. But the great satisfying answer of this objection is, that death will pass us to far greater pleasures, with which all these are not worthy to be compared. But of this more in due place.

Sect. 5. III. When I die, I must depart, not only from sensual delights, but from the more manly pleasures of my studies, knowledge, and converse with many wise and godly men, and from all my pleasure in reading, hearing, public and private exercises of religion, &c. I must leave my library, and turn over those pleasant books no more. I must no more come among the living, nor see the faces of my faithful friends, nor be seen of man. Houses, and cities, and fields, and countries, gardens, and walks, will be nothing as to me. I shall no more hear of the affairs of the world, of man, or wars, or other news, nor see what becomes of that beloved interest of wisdom, piety, and peace, which I desire may prosper, &c.

Ans. 1. Though these delights are far above those of sensual sinners, yet, alas! how low and little are they! How small is our knowledge in comparison of our ignorance! And how little doth the knowledge of learned doctors differ from the thoughts of a silly child! For from our childhood we take it in by drops, and as trifles are the matter of childish knowledge, so words, and notions, and artificial forms, do make up more of the learning of the world, than is commonly understood, and many such learned men know little more of any great and ex-

cellent things themselves, than rustics that are contemned by them for their ignorance. God, and the life to come, are little better known by them, if not much less, than by many of the unlearned. What is it but a child-game, that many logicians, rhetoricians, grammarians, yea, metaphysicians, and other philosophers, in their eagerest studies and disputes, are exercised in? Of how little use is it to know what is contained in many hundred of the volumes that fill our libraries! Yea, or to know many of the most glorious speculations in physics, mathematics, &c., which have given some the title of *Virtuosi*, and *Ingeniosi*, in these times, who have little the more wit or virtue to live to God, or overcome temptations from the flesh and world, and to secure their everlasting hopes. What pleasure or quiet doth it give to a dying man to know almost any of their trifles?

2. Yea, it were well if much of our reading and learning did us no harm, nay, more than good. I fear lest books are to some but a more honourable kind of temptation than cards and dice, lest many a precious hour be lost in them, that should be employed on much higher matters, and lest many make such knowledge but an unholy, natural, yea, carnal pleasure, as worldlings do the thoughts of their lands and honours, and lest they be the more dangerous by how much the less suspected. But the best is, it is a pleasure so fenced from the slothful with thorny labour of hard and long studies, that laziness saveth more from it than grace and holy wisdom doth. But, doubtless, fancy and the natural intellect may, with as little sanctity, live in the pleasure of reading, knowing, disputing, and writing, as others spend their time at a game at chess, or other ingenious sport.

For my own part, I know that the knowledge of natural things is valuable, and may be sanctified, much more theological theory, and when it is so, it is of good use; and I have little knowledge which I find not some way useful to my highest ends. And if wishing or money could procure more, I would wish and empty my purse for it; but yet if many score or hundred books which I have read, had been all unread, and I had that time now to lay out upon higher things, I should think myself much richer than now I am. And I must earnestly pray, the Lord forgive me the hours that I have spent in reading things less profitable, for the pleasing of a mind that would fain know all, which I should have spent for the increase of holiness in myself and others! and yet I must thankfully acknowledge to God; that

from my youth he taught me to begin with things of greatest weight, and to refer most of my other studies thereto, and to spend my days under the motives of necessity and profit to myself, and those with whom I had to do. And I now think better of the course of Paul, that determined to know nothing but a crucified Christ, among the Corinthians, that is, so to converse with them as to use, and glorying as if he knew nothing else, and so of the rest of the apostles and primitive ages. And though I still love and honour, (and am not of Dr. Colet's mind, who, as Erasmus saith, most slighted Augustine,) yet I less censure even that Carthage council which forbade the reading of the heathens' books of learning and arts, than formerly I have done. And I would have men savour most that learning in their health, which they will, or should, savour most in sickness, and near to death.

3. And, alas! how dear a vanity is this knowledge! That which is but theoretic and notional, is but a tickling delectation of the fancy or mind, little differing from a pleasant dream. But how many hours, what gazing of the wearied eye, what stretching thoughts of the impatient brain must it cost us, if we will attain to any excellency? Well saith Solomon, "Much reading is a weariness to the flesh, and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow." How many hundred studious days and weeks, and how many hard and tearing thoughts, hath my little, very little knowledge, cost me; and how much infirmity and painfulness to my flesh, increase of painful diseases, and loss of bodily ease and health! How much pleasure to myself of other kinds, and how much acceptance with men have I lost by it, which I might easily have had in a more conversant and plausible way of life! And when all is done, if I reach to know any more than others of my place and order, I must differ so much (usually) from them, and if I manifest not that difference, but keep all that knowledge to myself, I sin against conscience and nature itself. The love of man, and the love of truth, oblige me to be soberly communicative. Were I so indifferent to truth and knowledge, as easily to forbear their propagation, I must also be so indifferent to them, as not to think them worth so dear a price as they have cost me (though they are the free gifts of God). As nature is universally inclined to the propagation of the kind by generation, so is the intellectual nature to the communication of knowledge, which yet hath its lust and inordi-

nacy in proud, ignorant, hasty teachers and disputers, as the generating faculty hath in fornicators and adulterers.

But if I obey nature and conscience in communicating that knowledge which containeth my difference aforesaid, the dissenters too often take themselves disparaged by it, how peaceably soever I manage it; and as bad men take the piety of the godly to be an accusation of their impiety, so many teachers take themselves to be accused of ignorance, by such as condemn their errors by the light of truth: and if you meddle not with any person, yet take they their opinions to be so much their interest, as that all that is said against them they take as said against themselves. And then, alas! what envyings, what whispering disparagements, and what backbitings, if not malicious slanders and underminings, do we meet with from the carnal clergy! And O that it were all from them alone! and that among the zealous and suffering party of faithful preachers, there were not much of such iniquity, and that none of them preached Christ in strife and envy! It is sad that error should find so much shelter under the selfishness and pride of pious men, and that the friends of truth should be tempted to reject and abuse so much of it in their ignorance, as they do: but the matter of fact is too evident to be hid.

But, especially, if we meet with a clergy that are high, and have a great deal of worldly interest at the stake: or, if they be in councils and synods, and have got the major vote, they too easily believe that either their grandeur, reverence, names, or numbers, must give them the reputation of being orthodox, and in the right, and will warrant them to account and defame him as erroneous, heretical, schismatical, singular, factious, or proud, that presumeth to contradict them, and to know more than they. Of which not only the case of Nazianzen, Martin, Chrysostom, are sad proofs, but also the proceedings of too many general and provincial councils. And so our hard studies and darling truth must make us as owls, or reproached persons, among those reverend brethren, who are ignorant at easier rates, and who find it a far softer kind of life to think and say as the most or best-esteemed do, than to purchase reproach and obloquy so dearly.

And the religious people of the several parts will say as they hear their teachers do, and be the militant followers of their too militant leaders: and it will be their house talk, their

shop talk, their street talk, if not their church talk, that such an one is an erroneous, dangerous man, because he is not as ignorant and erroneous as they, especially if they be the followers of a teacher much exasperated by confutation, and engaged in the controversy; and also if it should be suffering confessors that are contradicted, or men most highly esteemed for extraordinary degrees of piety: then, what cruel censures must he expect, who ever so tenderly would suppress their errors?

Oh! what sad instances of this are, 1. The case of the confessors in Cyprian's days, who, as many of his epistles show, became the great disturbers of that church. 2. And the Egyptian monks at Alexandria, in the days of Theophilus, who turned Anthropomorphites, and raised abominable tumults, with woful scandal, and odious bloodshed. 3. And O that this age had not yet greater instances to prove the matter than any of these!

And, now, should a man be loth to die, for fear of leaving such troublesome, costly learning and knowledge, as the wisest men can here attain?

4. But the chief answer is yet behind. No knowledge is lost, but perfected, and changed for much nobler, sweeter, greater knowledge. Let men be never so uncertain in particular *de modo*, whether acquired habits of intellect and memory die with us, as being dependent on the body; yet, by what manner soever, that a far clearer knowledge we shall have than is here attainable, is not to be doubted of. And the cessation of our present mode of knowing, is but the cessation of our ignorance and imperfection: as our wakening endeth a dreaming knowledge, and our maturity endeth the trifling knowledge of a child: for so saith the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. xiii. 8—12.) Love never faileth, and we can love no more than we know; but whether there be prophecies they shall fail (that is, cease): whether there be tongues they shall cease: whether there be knowledge, notional and abstractive, such as we have now, it shall vanish away: "When I was a child I spake as a child, understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things: for now we see through a glass (*per species*) darkly," as men understand a thing by a metaphor, parable, or riddle, "but then face to face;" even creatures intuitively, as in themselves naked and open to our sight. "Now, I know in part;" (not *rem sed aliquid rei*; in which sense Sanchez truly saith, '*nihil scitur*;) "but then I shall

know, even as I am known; not as God knoweth us:" for our knowledge and his must not be so comparatively likened; but as holy spirits know us both now and for ever, we shall both know and be known by immediate intuition.

If a physician be to describe the parts of a man, and the latent diseases of his patient, he is fain to search hard, and bestow many thoughts of it, besides his long reading and converse, to make him capable of knowing: and when all is done, he goeth much upon conjectures, and his knowledge is mixed with many uncertainties, yea, and mistakes; but when he openeth the corpse, he seeth all, and his knowledge is more full, more true, and more certain; besides that, it is easily and quickly attained, even by a present look. A countryman knoweth the town, the fields, and rivers, where he dwelleth, yea, and the plants and animals, with ease and certain clearness, when he that must know the same things by the study of geographical writings and tables, must know them but with a general, an unsatisfactory, and oft a much mistaking kind of knowledge. Alas! when our present knowledge hath cost a man the study of forty, or fifty, or sixty years, how lean and poor, how doubtful and unsatisfactory is it after all! But when God will show us himself, and all things, and when heaven is known as the sun by its own light, this will be the clear, sure, and satisfactory knowledge: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" (Matt. v. ;) "And without holiness none can see him." (Heb. xii. 14.) This sight will be worthy the name of wisdom, when our present glimpse is but philosophy, a love and desire of wisdom. So far should we be from fearing death, through the fear of losing our knowledge, or any of the means of knowledge, that it should make us rather long for the world of glorious light, that we might get out of this darkness, and know all that with an easy look, to our joy and satisfaction, which here we know with troublesome doubtings, or not at all. Shall we be afraid of darkness in the heavenly light, or of ignorance, when we see the Lord of glory?

Sect. 6. And as for the loss of sermons, books, and other means, surely it is no loss to cease the means when we have attained the end. Cannot we spare our winter clothes, as troublesome, in the heat of summer, and sit by the hot fire without our gloves? Cannot we sit at home without a horse or a coach, or set them by at our journey's end? Cannot we lie in bed without boots and spurs? Is it grievous to us to cease our

physic when we are well. Even here, he is happier that hath least of the creature, and needeth least, than he that hath much and needeth much; because all creature commodities and helps have also their discommodities and troublesomeness; and the very applying and using so many remedies of our want is tedious of itself: and as God only needeth nothing, but is self-sufficient, and therefore only perfectly and essentially happy, so those are likest God that need least from without, and have the greatest plenitude of internal goodness. What need we to preach, hear, read, pray, to bring us to heaven, when we are there?

Sect. 7. And as for our friends, and our converse with them, as relations, or as wise, religious, and faithful to us, he that believeth not that there are far more, and far better, in heaven, than are on earth, doth not believe, as he ought, that there is a heaven. Our friends here are wise, but they are unwise also; they are faithful, but partly unfaithful; they are holy, but also, alas! too sinful; they have the image of God, but blotted and dishonoured by their faults; they do God and his church much service, but they also do too much against him, and too much for Satan, even when they intend the honour of God; they promote the gospel, but they also hinder it: their weakness, ignorance, error, selfishness, pride, passion, division, contention, scandals, and remissness, do oft so much hurt, that it is hard to discern, whether it be not greater than their good to the church, or to their neighbours. Our friends are our helpers and comforters; but how oft also are they our hinderers, troubles, and grief? But in heaven they are altogether wise, and holy, and faithful, and concordant, and have nothing in them, nor there done by them, but what is amiable to God and man.

And, with our faithful friends, we have here a mixture, partly of useless and burdensome persons, and partly of unfaithful hypocrites, and partly of self-conceited factious wranglers, and partly of malicious, envious underminers, and partly by implacable enemies; and how many of all these, set together is there for one worthy, faithful friend! And how great a number is there to trouble you, for one that will indeed comfort you! But in heaven there are none but the wise and holy; no hypocrites, no burdensome neighbours, no treacherous, or oppressing, or persecuting enemies are there. And is not all good and amiable better than a little good, with so troublesome a mixture of noisome evils?

Christ loved his disciples, his kindred; yea, and all mankind, and took pleasure in doing good to all, and so did his apostles; but how poor a requital had he or they from any but from God? Christ's own brethren believed not in him, but wrangled with him, almost like those that said to him on the cross, "If thou be the Son of God, come down, and we will believe." Peter himself was once a Satan to him; (Matt. xvi. ;) and after, with cursing and swearing, denied him: and all his disciples forsook him, and fled; and what, then, could be expected from others?

No friends have a perfect suitableness to each other; and roughness and inequalities that are nearest us are most troublesome. The wonderful variety and contrariety of apprehensions, interest, educations, temperaments, and occasions, and temptations, &c., are such, that while we are scandalised, at the discord and confusions of the world, we must recall ourselves, and admire that all-ruling providence, which keepeth up so much order and concord as there is: we are, indeed, like people in crowded streets, who, going several ways, molest each other with their jostling oppositions; or, like boys at football, striving to overthrow each other for the ball; but it is a wonder of divine power and wisdom, that all the world is not continually in mortal war.

If I do men no harm, yet if I do but cross their wills, it goeth for a provoking injury; and when there are as many wills as persons, who is it that can please them all? Who hath money enough to please all the poor that need it, or the covetous that desire it? Or, who can live with displeased men, and not feel some of the fruits of their displeasure? What day goeth over my head, in which abundance desire not, or expect not, impossibilities from me? And how great is the number of them that expect unrighteous things! By nothing do I displease so many, as by not displeasing God and my conscience; and for nothing am I so deeply accused of sin as for not sinning. And the world will not think well of any thing that crosseth their opinion and carnal interest, be it never so conform to God's commands; I must confess, that while I suffer from all sides, few men have more common and open praises from their persecutors, than I: but while they praise me in general, and for other particulars, they aggravate my non-conformity to their opinions and wills, and take me to be so much the more hurtful to them. The greatest crimes that have been charged on me, have been for

the things which I thought to be my greatest duties; and for those parts of my obedience, to my conscience and God, which cost me dearest; and where I pleased my flesh least, I pleased the world least. At how cheap a rate to my flesh could I have got the applause of factious men, if that had been my end and business. Would I have conformed to their wills, and taken a bishopric, and the honours and riches of the world, how good a man had I been called by the diocesan party. And oh, what praise I should have with the papists, could I turn papist; and all the backbiting and bitter censures of the antinomians, anabaptists, and separatists, had been turned into praise, could I have said as they, or not contradicted them. But otherwise there is no escaping their accusations; and is this tumultuous, militant, yea, malignant world, a place that I should be loth to leave?

Alas! our darkness, and weakness, and passions are such, that it is hard for a family, or a few faithful friends, to live so evenly in the exercise of love, as not to have oft unpleasant jars. What, then, is to be expected from strangers, and from enemies? Ten thousand persons will judge of abundance of my words and actions, who never knew the reasons of them. Every one's conceptions are as the report and conveyance of the matter to them is; and while they have a various light, and false reports, (and defectiveness will make them false,) what can be expected, but false injurious censures?

Sect. 8. And though no outward thing on earth is more precious than the holy word, and worship, and ordinances of God, yet even here I see that which pointeth me up higher, and telleth me it is much better to be with Christ. 1. Shall I love the name of heaven better than heaven itself? The holy Scriptures are precious, because I have there the promise of glory; but is not the possession better than the promise? If a light and guide thither through this wilderness be good, surely the end must needs be better. And it hath pleased God, that all things on earth, and therefore, even the sacred Scriptures should bear the marks of our state of imperfection: imperfect persons were the penmen; and imperfect human language is the conveying, signal, organical part of the matter; and the method and phrase (though true and blameless) are far short of the heavenly perfection. Else so many commentators had not found so hard a task of it to expound innumerable difficulties, and reconcile so many seeming contradictions; nor would in-

fidels find matter of so strong temptation, and so much cavil as they do; nor would Peter have told us of the difficulties of Paul's epistles, and such occasions of men's wresting them to their own destruction. Heaven will not be made, to perfect spirits, the occasion of so many errors, and controversies, and quarrels, as the Scriptures are to us imperfect men on earth; yea, heaven is the more desirable, because there I shall better understand the Scriptures, than here I can ever hope to do. All the hard passages, now misunderstood, will be there made plain, and all the seeming contradictions reconciled; and, which is much more, that God, that Christ, that new Jerusalem, that glory, and that felicity of souls, which are now known but darkly and enigmatically in the glass, will then be known intuitively as we see the face itself, whose image only the glass first showed us. To leave my bible, and go to the God and the heaven that is revealed, will be no otherwise a loss to me, than to lay by my crutches, or spectacles, when I need them not, or to leave his image for the presence of my friend.

2. Much less do I need to fear the loss of all other books, or sermons, or other verbal informations. Much reading hath oft been a weariness to my flesh; and the pleasure of my mind is much abated by the great imperfection of the means. Many books must be partly read, that I may know that they are scarce worth the reading; and many must be read, to enable us to satisfy other men's expectations, and to confute those who abuse the authority of the authors against the truth: and many good books must be read, that have little to add to what we have read in many others before; and many that are blotted with ensnaring errors; which, if we detect not, we leave snares for such as see them not; and if we detect them, (never so tenderly, if truly,) we are taken to be injurious to the honour of the learned, godly authors, and proudly to overvalue our own conceits. And so lamentable is the case of all mankind, by the imperfections of human language, that those words which are invented for communication of conceptions, are so little fitted to their use, as rather to occasion misunderstanding and contentions; there being scarce a word that hath not many significations, and that needeth not many more words to bring us to the true notice of the speaker's mind; and when every word is a *signum*, that hath three relations, 1. To the matter spoken of. 2. To the mind of the speaker, as signifying his conceptions of that matter. 3. And to the mind of the hearer, or reader,

which is to be informed by it, it is so hard to find and use words that are fitted indeed to all these uses, and to have store of such, and mix no other, that few, if any, in the world were ever so happy as to attain it. 1. And if words be not fitted to the matter or things, they are false as to their first and proper use; and yet the penury of apt words, and the redundancy of others, and the authority of the masters of sciences, imposing arbitrary terms and notions on their disciples, and the custom of the vulgar, who have the empire, as to the sense of words, have all conspired to make words inapt, and of very uncertain signification. So that when students have learned words by long and hard studies, they are oft little the nearer the true knowledge of the things; and too oft, by their inaptitude, misled to false conceptions. And so their saying is too often true, that a great book is a great evil, while it containeth so great a number of uncertain words, which become the matter of great contentions.

2. And when the mind of the speaker or writer is no better informed by such notions, but his conceptions of things are some false, some confused and undigested, what wonder if his words do no otherwise express his mind to others, when even men of clearest understanding find it difficult to have words still ready to communicate their conceptions with truth and clearness. To form true sentiments of things into apt, significant words, is a matter of mere art, and requireth an apt teacher, and a serious learner, and long use (and too many take their art of speaking, in prayer, conference, or preaching, to have more in it of wisdom and piety, than it hath; and some too much condemn the unaccustomed that want it).

3. And if we could fit our words well to the matter, and to our minds, (with that double verity,) yet still it is hard to fit them to the reader or hearer; for want of which they are lost as to him; and his information being our end, they are therefore so far lost to us. And that which is spoken most congruously to the matter, is seldom fitted to the capacity of the receiver. And *recipitur ad modum recipientis, et pro captu lectoris, &c.* Some readers or hearers, (yea, almost all,) are so used to unapt words and notions, obtruded on mankind, by the master of words, that they cannot understand us if we change their terms and offer them fitter, and yet least understand those which they think that they best understand; and all men must have long time to learn the art of words, before they can understand

them as well as before they can readily use them. And the duller any man is, and of less understanding, the more words are necessary to make him understand; and yet his memory is the less capable of retaining many. This is our difficulty, not only in catechising, but in all other writings and teaching, a short catechism, or a short style, the ignorant understand not: and a long one they remember not. And he that will accommodate one judicious reader or hearer, with profound matter, or an accurate style, must incommode multitudes that are incapable of it; and, therefore, such must be content with few approvers, and leave the applause of the multitude to the more popular, unless he be one that can seasonably suit himself to both.

A man that resolveth not to be deceived by ambiguous words, and maketh it his first work, in all his readings and disputings, to difference between words, and sense, and things, and strictly to examine each disputed term, till the speaker's meaning be distinctly known, will see the lamentable case of the church, and all mankind, and what shadows of knowledge deceive the world, and in what useless dreams the greatest part of men, yea, of learned men, do spend their days: much of that which some men unweariedly study, and take to be the honour of their understandings, and their lives; and much of that, which multitudes place their piety and hopes of salvation in, being a mere game at words, and useless notions; and as truly to be called vanity and vexation, as is the rest of the vain show, that most men walk in. My sad and bitter thoughts of the heathen, infidel, Mahometan world, and of the common corruptions of rulers and teachers, cities and countries, senates and councils, I will not here open to others, lest they offend; nor cry out as Seneca, *Omnes mali sumus*, or *Stultorum plena sunt omnia*, nor describe the furious spirits of the clergy, and their ignorance, and unrighteous calumnies and schisms, as Gregory Nazianzen and others do, nor voluminously lament the seeming hopeless case of earth, by the boldness, blindness, and fury of men that make use of such sad considerations, to loosen my love from such a world, and make me willing to be with Christ.

9. And if other men's words and writings are blemished with so much imperfection, why should I think that my own are blameless? I must for ever be thankful for the holy instructions and writings of others, notwithstanding human frailty, and contentious men's abuse of words: and so I must be thankful that God hath made any use of my own, for the good of

souls, and his church's edification. But with how many allays are such comforts here mixed? We are not the teachers of a well-ruled school, where learners are ranked into several forms, that every one may have the teaching which is agreeable to his capacity; but we must set open the door to all that will crowd in, and publish our writings to all sorts of readers: and there being as various degrees of capacity as there are men and women, and consequently great variety and contrariety of apprehensions, it is easy *ab antecedente* to know what various reception we must expect: we cast out our doctrine almost as a foot-ball is turned out among boys in the street, in some congregations: few understand it, but every one censureth it. Few come as learners, or teachable disciples, but most come to sit as judges on their teacher's words; and yet have not either the skill, or the patience, or the diligence, which is necessary in a just trial, to a righteous judgment. But as our words agree or disagree with the former conceptions of every hearer, so are they judged to be wise or foolish, sound or unsound, true or false, fit or unfit. Few sermons that I preach, but one extolleth them, and wisheth they were printed, and another accuseth them of some heinous fault: some men are pleased with clearness and accurateness of doctrine; and others account it too high, and say we shoot over the hearers' heads, and like nothing but the fervent application of what they knew before: most hearers are displeased with that which they most need: if they err, they reproach that doctrine as erroneous that would cure them: if they are guilty of any prevailing distemper and sin, they take that application to be injurious to them, which would convince them, and save them from that guilt. Most are much pleased with plain and zealous reproof of sin; but it must be other men's sins, and not their own. The poor love to hear of the evil of oppression and unmercifulness, of pride, fulness, and idleness, and all the sins of the rich: subjects love to hear of their ruler's faults, and say, O this man is no flatterer; he dares tell the greatest of their sins: but if they hear of their own, they take it for an injury. Rulers like a sermon for submission and obedience, but how few love to hear of the evil of injustice and oppression, or pride and sensuality, or to read Luke xvi. or xii. or James v.; to hear of the necessity of holiness, justice, and temperance, and of death, and judgment, and the life to come! Every sectary and dogmatist delighteth to have his own opinion cried up, and his party praised as the chiefest saints:

but all that tendeth to the praise of those that he dissenteth from, and accounteth adversaries to the truth, is distasteful to him, as a complying with iniquity, and a strengthening of the enemies of Christ: and all that uncharitableness which he expecteth from us against others, is as much expected by others against him, and such as he.

This day, while I am writing these words, my pockets are full of letters sent me, on one side importunately charging it on me as my duty to conform to the oaths, declarations, covenants, and practices, now imposed, or else to give over preaching (which would please them); and on the other side vehemently censuring me as guilty of grievous sin, for declaring my judgment for so much of conformity as I have done; and charging me by predictions as guilty of the sufferings of all that are otherwise minded, for communicating in the sacrament, and the common prayers of the church; and others in the mid-way, persuading me equally to bear my testimony against unjust separation and persecution, and to endeavour still, if possible, to save a self-destroying people from the tearing fury of these two extremes. And how should I answer these contrary expectations, or escape the censures of such expectants?

And it hath pleased God, who thirty years and more had tried me by human applause, of late in this city (where multitudes of persons of contrary minds are, like passengers in crowded streets, still jostling and offending one another) to exercise me with men's daily backbitings and cavils: and so many have chosen me for the subject of their discourse, that I may say as Paul, (1 Cor. iv. 9, 10, &c.,) "We are made a spectacle (or theatre) to the world, and to angels, and to men: we are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ," &c. Did I not live out of the noise in retirement, taken up with pain, and expectations of my change, what an annoyance to me would it be to hear religious persons, that have a God, a Christ, a heaven, to talk of, to abuse their time and tongues in so much talking of one so inconsiderable, and that hath so little to do with them, or they with him; while with some overvaluing me, and others still quarrelling, I am the matter of their idle, sinful talk. The persecutors, for divers years after, first silencing, (if not still,) and the separatists for two or three years last past, have been possessed with so strange a jealousy and quarrelsome a disposition against me, that they seem to take it for their interest to promote my defamation, and for much of their work to

search what may afford them any matter of accusation in every sermon that I preach, and every book that I write. And though the fury of the persecutors be such as maketh them much incapable of such converse and sober consideration as is needful to their true information and satisfaction; yet most of the more religious cavillers are satisfied as soon as I have spoken with them, and all endeth in a *putarem* or *non putarem*: for want of accurateness and patience, they judge rashly before they understand, and when they understand, confess their error; and yet many go on and take no warning after many times conviction of their mistake. Even in books that are still before their eyes (as well as in transient words and sermons) they heedlessly leave out, or put in, or alter and misreport plain words, and, with confidence, affirm those things to have been said that never were said, but, perhaps, the contrary. And when all people will judge of the good or evil of our words, as they think we have reason to use them or forbear them, how can we satisfy men that are out of our hearing, and to whom we cannot tell our reasons? Most men are of private, narrow observation, and judge of the good or hurt that our words do by those that they themselves converse with: and when I convince them that my decisions of many questions (which they are offended at) are true, they say, it is an unseasonable and a hurtful truth: and when I have called them to look further abroad in the world, and told them my reasons; they say, 'Had these been all set down, men would have been satisfied.' And on how hard terms do we instruct such persons, whose narrow understandings cannot know obvious reasons of what we say till they are particularly told them? And so to tell men the reasons of all that such can quarrel with, will make every book to swell with commentaries to such a bigness as they can neither buy nor read: and they come not to us to know our reasons; nor have we leisure to open them to every single person: and thus suspicious men, when their understandings want the humbling acquaintance with their ignorance, and their consciences that tenderness which should restrain them from rash judging, go on to accuse such needful truths of which they know not the use and reason. And what man living hath the leisure and opportunity to acquaint all the ignorant persons in city and country with all the reasons of all that he shall say, write, or do? Or who, that writeth not a page instead of a sentence, can so write that every unprepared reader shall understand him? and what

hopes hath that tutor or schoolmaster of preserving his reputation, who shall be accounted erroneous, and accused of unsound or injurious doctrine, by every scholar that understandeth not his words, and all the reasons of them ?

But God in great mercy to me hath made this my lot (not causing, but permitting, the sins of the contentious) that I might before death be better weaned from all below : had my temptations from inordinate applause had no allay, they might have been more dangerously strong. Even yet while church-dividers, on both extremes, do make me the object of their daily obloquy, the continued respects of the sober and peaceable, are so great, as to be a temptation strong enough, to so weak a person, to give a check to my desires to leave the world. It is long since riches and worldly honour appeared to me as they are, as not rendering the world much lovely or desirable. But the love and concord of religious persons hath a more amiable aspect : there is so much holiness in these, that I was loth to call them vanity and vexation : but yet as flesh and blood would refer them to selfish ends, and any way value them as a carnal interest, I must so call them, and number them with the things that are loss and dung : (Phil. iii. 7, 8.) Selfishness can serve itself upon things good and holy : and if good men, and good books, and good sermons, would make the world seem over-lovely to us, it will be a mercy of God to abate the temptation : and if my soul, looking toward the heavenly Jerusalem, be hindered as Paul was in his journey to Jerusalem, (Acts xx. and xxi.,) by the love of ancient friends and hearers, I must say, ' What mean you to weep and break my heart ! I am ready to leave the dearest friends on earth, and life, and all the pleasures of life, for the presence of far better friends with Christ, and the sweeter pleasures of a better life.' That little amiableness which is in things below, is in godly men as life in the heart, which dieth last : when that is all gone, when we are dead to the love of the godly themselves, and to learning, books, and mediate ordinances, so far as they serve a selfish interest, and tempt down our hearts from heavenly aspirings, the world is then crucified to us, indeed, and we to it. I rejoice to tread in the footsteps of my Lord, who had some, indeed, weeping about his cross, but was forsaken by all his disciples, while in the hour of temptation they all fled ! But my desertion is far less, for it is less that I am fit to bear. If God will justify, who shall condemn ? If he be for me, who shall be against me ? O may

I not be put to that dreadful case, to cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And may nothing separate me from his love! And then were I forsaken of the sober and peaceable, as I am, in part, of some quarrelsome dividers, how tolerable a trial would it be? Man is as dust in the balance, that addeth little to it, and signifieth nothing when God is in the other end. But I suspect still that I make too much account of man, when this case hath taken up too much of my observation.

1. And of all things, surely a departing soul hath least cause to fear the losing of its notice of the affairs of the world; of peace, or wars, or church, or kingdoms? For, 1. If the sun can send forth its material beams, and operate by motion, light, and heat, at such a distance as this earth, why should I think that blessed spirits are such local, confined, and impotent substances, as not to have notice of the things of earth? Had I but bodily eyes, I could see more from the top of a tower or hill, than any one that is below can do. And shall I know less of earth from heaven than I do now? It is unlike that my capacity will be so little, and if it were, it is unlike that Christ and all the angels will be so strange to me, as to give me no notice of things that so much concern my God and my Redeemer, (to whom I am united,) and the holy society of which I am a part, and myself as a member of Christ and that society! I do not think that the communion of the celestial inhabitants is so narrow and slow, as it is of walking clods of earth, and of souls that are confined to such dark lanterns as this body is. Stars can shine one to another, and we on earth can see them so far off in their heaven. And sure then if they have a seeing faculty each of them can see many of us; even the kingdoms of the world. Spirits are most active, and of powerful and quick communication. They need not send letters, or write books to one another, nor lift up a voice to make each other hear; nor is there any unkindness, division, or unsociable selfishness among them, which may cause them to conceal their notices or their joys; but as activity, so unity is greatest where there is most perfection; they will so be many, as yet to be one; and their knowledge will be one knowledge, and their love one love, and their joy one joy. Not by so perfect a unity as in God himself, who is one and but one; but such as is suitable to created imperfection, which participate of the perfection of the Creator, as the effect doth of the virtue

of the cause, and therefore hath some participation of his unity. (O foolish soul! if I shall fear this unity with God, Christ, and all the holy spirits, lest I should lose my present separate individuation, when perfection and union are so near a-kin.) In a word, I have no cause to think that my celestial advancement will be a diminution of any desirable knowledge, even of things on earth; but contrarily, that it will be inconceivably increased.

2. But if indeed I shall know less of things below, it will be because that the knowledge of them is a part of vanity and vexation, which hath no place in heaven. So much knowledge of good and evil in lower matters, as came to us by sin, is unworthy of our fond tenaciousness, and fear of losing it. Surely the sad tidings which we have weekly in our news books, our lamentable notices of heathen and infidel kingdoms, of the overspreading prevalency of barbarousness, idolatry, ignorance, and infidelity; of the rage and success of cruel tyrants; of the bloody wars of proud, unquiet, worldly men; of the misery of the oppressed, desolate countries, the dissipated churches, the persecuted, innocent Christians, are no such pleasing things as that we should be afraid to hear of such no more. To know or hear of the poor in famine, the rich in folly, the church distracted, the kingdom discontented, the godly scandalous by the effects of their errors, imperfections, and divisions; the wicked outrageous, and waxing worse, the falseness, or miscarriages, or sufferings of friends, the fury or success of enemies. Is this an intelligence which I cannot spare? What is the daily tidings that I hear, but of bloody wars, the undone countries, the persecuted churches, the silenced, banished, or imprisoned preachers; of the best removed in judgment from an unworthy world by death, and worse succeeding in their rooms, of the renewed designs and endeavours of the church's enemies; the implacable rage of the worldly and unquiet clergy, and the new divisions of self-conceited sectaries, and the obloquy and backbitings of each party against the other? How oft hear I the sad tidings of this friend's sickness or death, and that friend's discontent, and of another's fall, and of many, very many's sufferings? My ears are daily filled with the cries of the poor, whom I cannot relieve; with the endless complaints of fearful, melancholy, despairing persons; with the wranglings of the ignorant and proud professors, and contentious divines, who censure most boldly where they are most erroneous or dark; or with the

troublesome discontents of those that I converse with; and should I be afraid of the ending of so sad a tragedy, or of awaking out of such an unpleasant dream? Have I not many times thought of the privilege of the deaf, that hear not these troublesome and provoking things; and of the blind that see not the vanities and temptations of this world. It is one part of the benefit of solitude, or a private life and habitation, to free me from many of these unpleasing objects; and a great part of the benefit of sleep, that with my clothes I may lay by these troublesome thoughts.

Sect. 11. But other men tell me, the church cannot yet spare you; there is yet this and that necessary work to be done; there is this and that need, &c.

But, 1. Is it we or God that must choose his servants, and cut out their work? Whose work am I doing? Is it my own or his? If his, is it not he that must tell me what, and when, and how long? And will not his will and choice be best? If I believe not this, how do I take him for my God? Doth God or I know better what he hath yet to do? And who is fittest to do it? The church's service and benefits must be measured out by our Master and Benefactor, and not by ourselves.

2. What am I to those more excellent persons whom, in all ages, he hath taken out of the world? And would men's thoughts of the church's needs detain them? The poor heathen, infidel, Mahometan nations have no preachers of the Gospel. And if their need prove not that God will send them such, no country's need will prove that God will continue them such. Many more useful servants of Christ have died in their youth: John Janeway preached but one sermon; Joseph Allen (and many other excellent men) died in the midst of his vigorous, successful labours; both of them far more fit for God's work, and likely to win souls, and glorify God, than I am, or ever was, however their greater light was partly kindled from my lesser. Yet did both these, under painful consuming languishings of the flesh, die as they had long lived, in the lively triumphant praises of their Redeemer, and joyful desires and hopes of glory. And shall I, at seventy-six years of age, after such a life of unspeakable mercies, and almost fifty-three years of comfortable help in the service of my Lord, be now afraid of my reward, and shrink at the sentence of death, and still be desiring to stay here, upon pretence of further service? We know not what is best for the church as God doth; the

church and the world are not ours but his ; not our desires, but his will must measure out its mercies. We are not so merciful as he is. It is not unmeet for us to desire many things which God will not give, nor seeth it meet to grant the particulars of such desires. Nothing ever lay so heavy on my heart, as the sin and misery of mankind, and to think how much the world lieth in folly and wickedness ! - And for what can I pray so heartily as for the world's recovery ? and it is his will that I should show a holy and universal love by praying, " Let thy name be hallowed, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven ;" and yet alas, how unlike is earth to heaven, and what ignorance, sin, confusions, and cruelties, here reign and prosper ! And unless there be a wonderful change to be expected, even as by a general miracle, how little hope appeareth that ever these prayers should be granted in the things ! It maketh us better to desire that others may be better ; but God is the free disposer of his own gifts : and it seemeth to be his will, that the permitted ignorance and confusions of this world should help us the more to value and desire that world of light, love, and order, which he calleth us to prefer and hope for.

And if I am any way useful to the world, it is undeserved mercy that hath made me so, for which I must be thankful ; but how long I shall be so, is not my business to determine, but my Lord's. My many sweet and beautiful flowers arise and appear in their beauty and sweetness, but for one summer's time, and they murmur not that they flourish for so short a space. The beasts, and birds, and fishes, which I feed on, do live till I will have them die ; and as God will be served and pleased by wonderful variety at once of animals and vegetables, &c., so will he by many successive generations. If one flower fall or die, it sufficeth that others shall, summer after summer, arise from the same root : and if my pears, apples, plums, &c., fall or serve me when they are ripe, it sufficeth that, not they, but others, the next year, shall do the same ; God will have other generations to succeed us. Let us thank him that we have had our time : and could we overcome the grand (too little observed) crime of *selfishness*, and could love others as ourselves, and God, as God, above all the world, it would comfort us at death, that others shall survive us, and the world shall continue, and God will be still God, and be glorified in his works : and love will say, I shall live in my successors, and I shall more than live in the life of the world, and yet most of all in the eternal life and glory of God.

And God, who made us not gods, but poor creatures, as it pleased him, doth know best our measures, and he will not try us with too long a life of temptations, lest we should grow too familiar where we should be strangers, and utterly strangers to our home. No wonder if that world was ready for a deluge, by a deluge of sin, in which men lived to six, seven, eight, and nine hundred years of age. Had our great sensualists any hope of so long a life, they would be more like incarnate devils, and there would be no dwelling near them for the holy seed. If angels were among them, they would, like the Sodomites, seek furiously to abuse them.

Nor will God tire us out with too long a life of earthly sufferings. We think short cares, and fears, and sorrows, persecutions, sickness, and crosses to be long, and shall we grudge at the wisdom and love which shorteneth them? Yea, though holy duty itself be excellent and sweet, yet the weakness of the flesh maketh us liable to weariness, and abateth the willingness of the spirit, and our wise and merciful God will not make our warfare, or our race, too long, lest we be wearied and faint, and fall short of the prize. By our weariness, and complaints, and fears, and groans, one would think that we thought this life too long, and yet when we should yield to the call of God, we draw back as if we would have it everlasting.

Sect. 12. Willingly submit, then, O my soul. It is not thou, but this flesh, that must be dissolved; this troublesome, vile, and corruptible flesh. It is but the other half of thy meat and drink, which thy presence kept longer uncorrupted, going after the excremental part. Thou diest not when man (the *compositum*) dieth, by thy departure. And as thou livest not to thyself, thou diest not to thyself; whether I live or die, I am the Lord's; he that set up the candle, knoweth how long he hath use for the light of it. Study thy duty, and work while it is day, and let God choose thy time, and willingly stand to his disposal. The gospel dieth not when I die. The church dieth not. The praises of God die not. The world dieth not, and perhaps it shall grow better, and those prayers shall be answered which seemed lost. Yea, and it may be some of the seed that I have sown, shall spring up to some benefit of the dark unpeaceable world when I am dead. And is not this much of the end of life? And is not that life good which attaineth its end? If my end was to do good and glorify God, if good be done,

and God glorified when I am dead, yea, though I were annihilated, is not my end attained? Feign not thyself to be God, whose interest (that is, the pleasing of his will) is the end of all things, and whose will is the measure of all created good. Feign not thyself to be all the world: God hath not lost his work; the world is not dissolved when I am dissolved. Oh, how strong and unreasonable a disease is this inordinate *selfishness*! Is not God's will infinitely better than mine, and fitter to be fulfilled? Choose the fulfilling of his will, and thou shalt always have thy choice. If a man be well that can always have his will, let this always be thy will, that God's will may be done, and thou shalt always have it.

Lord, let thy servant depart in peace; even in thy peace, which passeth understanding, and which Christ, the prince of peace, doth give, and nothing in the world can take away. Oh, give me that peace which beseemeth a soul, which is so near the harbour, even the world of endless peace and love, where perfect union (such as I am capable of) will free me from all the sins and troubles which are caused by the convulsions, divisions, and confusions of this divided, selfish world. Call home this soul by the encouraging voice of love, that it may joyfully hear, and say, 'It is my Father's voice.' Invite it to thee by the heavenly messenger. Attract it by the tokens and the foretastes of love. The messengers that invited me to the feast of grace, compelled me to come in without constraint. Thy effectual call did make me willing, and is not glory better than preparing grace? Shall I not come more willingly to the celestial feast? What was thy grace for, but to make me willing of glory, and the way to it? Why didst thou dart down thy beams of love, but to make me love thee, and to call me up to the everlasting centre? Was not the feast of grace as a sacrament of the feast of glory? Did I not take it in remembrance of my Lord until he come? Did not he that told me, "All things are ready," tell me also that "he is gone to prepare a place for us?" and it is his will that we shall be with him, and see his glory. They that are given him, and drawn to him by the Father on earth, do come to Christ. Give, now, and draw my departing soul to my glorified Head; and, as I have glorified thee on earth, in the measure that thy grace hath prevailed in me, pardon the sins by which I have offended thee, and glorify me in the beholding and participation of the glory of my Redeemer. Come,

Lord Jesus, come quickly, with fuller life, and light, and love, into this too dead, and dark, and disaffected soul, that it may come with joyful willingness unto thee.

Sect. 13. Willingly depart, O lingering soul! It is from a Sodom, though in it there be righteous Lots, who yet are not without their woful blemishes! Hast thou so oft groaned for the general blindness and wickedness of the world, and art thou loth to leave it for a better? How oft wouldest thou have rejoiced to have seen but the dawning of a day of universal peace and reformation? And wouldest thou not see it where it shineth forth in fullest glory? Would a light at midnight have pleased thee so well? Hast thou prayed and laboured for it so hard? And wouldest thou not see the sun? Will the things of heaven please thee no where but on earth, where they come in the least and weakest influences, and are terminated in gross, terrene, obscure, and unkind recipients? Away, away, the vindictive flames are ready to consume this sinful world! Sinners that blindly rage in sin must quickly rage in the effects of sin and of God's justice. The pangs of lust prepared for these pangs! They are treasuring up wrath against this day. Look not, then, behind thee. Away from this unhappy world! Press on unto the mark. (Phil. iii.) "Looking towards, and hastening to the coming of the day of God." (2 Pet. iii. 10—12.)

As this world hath used thee, it would use thee still, and it will use others. If thou hast sped well in it, no thanks to it, but unto God. If thou hast had manifold deliverances, and marvellous preservations, and hast been fed with angel's food, love not this wilderness for it, but God and his angel, which was thy guide, protector, and deliverer.

And hath this troublesome flesh been so comfortable a companion to thee, that thou shouldest be so loth to leave it? Have thy pains, thy weariness, thy languishings, thy labours, thy cares and fears about this body, been pleasing to thee? And art thou loth that they should have an end? Didst thou not find a need of patience to undergo them? And of greater patience than mere nature gave thee? And canst thou hope now for better when nature faileth, and that an aged, consumed, more diseased body, should be a pleasanter habitation to thee than it was heretofore? If from thy youth up it hath been both a tempting and a troublesome thing to thee, surely, though it be less tempting, it will not be less troubling, when it is falling to the dust, and above ground savoureth of the grave! Had

things sensible been never so pleasant in thy youth, and hadst thou glutted thyself in health with that sort of delight, in age thou art to say by nature, "I have no pleasure in them." Doth God in great mercy make pain and feebleness the harbingers of death, and wilt thou not understand their business? Doth he mercifully, beforehand, take away the pleasure of all fleshly things, and worldly vanities, that there may be nothing to relieve a departing soul, (as the shell breaketh when the bird is hatched, and the womb relaxed when the infant must be born,) and yet shall we stay when nothing holdeth us, and still be loth to come away? Wouldest thou dwell with thy beloved body in the grave, where it will rot and stink in loathsome darkness? If not, why should it now, in its painful languor, seem to thee a more pleasant habitation than the glorious presence of thy Lord? In the grave it will be at rest, and not tormented as now it is, nor wish at night, oh, that it were morning! nor say at morning, when will it be night? And is this a dwelling fit for thy delight? Patience in it, while God will so try thee, is thy duty, but is such patience a better and sweeter life than rest and joy?

Sect. 14. But, alas! how deaf is flesh to reason. Faith hath the reason which easily may shame all contrary reasoning, but sense is unreasonable, and especially this inordinate, tenacious love of present life. I have reason enough to be willing to depart, even much more willing than I am. Oh, that I could be as willing as I am convinced that I have reason to be! Could I love God as much as I know that I should love him, then I should desire to depart, and to be with Christ, as much as I know that I should desire it. But God, in nature, hath there laid upon me some necessity of aversation, (though the inordinateness came from sin,) else Christ had not so feared, and deprecated the cup. Death must be a penalty, even where it is a gain, and therefore it must meet with some unwillingness: because we willingly sinned, we must unwillingly suffer. The gain is not the pain or dissolution in itself, but the happy consequents of it. All the faith and reason in the world will not make death to be no penalty, and therefore will not take away all unwillingness. No man ever yet reasoned or believed himself into a love of pain and death, as such, but seeing that the gain is unspeakably greater than the pain and loss, faith and holy reason may make our willingness to be greater than our unwillingness, and our hope and joy than our fear and sorrow.

And it is the deep and effectual notice of goodness, which is God's way, in nature and grace, to change and draw the will of man. Come then, my soul, and think, believingly, what is best for thee. And wilt thou not love and desire most that which is certainly the best?

To depart and to be with Christ is far better, or rather to be chosen.

Sect. 1. To say and hear that it is far better to be with Christ, is not enough to make us willing. Words and notions are such instruments as God useth to work on souls, but the convincing, satisfying, powerful light, and the inclining love, are other things. The soul now operateth *ut forma hominis*, on and with the corporeal spirits and organs, and it perceiveth now its own perceptions, but it is a stranger to the mode of its future action, when separated from the body, and can have no formal conception of such conceptions as yet it never had. And therefore, its thoughts of its future state must be analogical and general, and partly strange. But general notices, when certain, may be very powerful, and satisfy us in so much as is needful to our consent, and to such a measure of joy as is suitable to this earthly state. And such notices we have from the nature of the soul, with the nature of God, the course of Providence, and government of mankind, the internal and external conflicts which we perceive about men's souls, the testimony and promises of the word of God, the testimony of conscience, with the witness of the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, and in it the earnest and the foretaste of glory, and the beginnings of life eternal here, all which I have before considered.

Sect. 2. The Socinians, who would interpret this of the state of resurrection only, against plain evidence, violate the text: seeing Paul expressly speaketh of his gain by death, which will be his abode with Christ, and this upon his departure hence: which (in 2 Cor. v. 7, 8) he calleth, his being absent from the body, and present with the Lord: and Christ, to the penitent thief, calleth his being with him in Paradise: and (Luke xvi.) in the parable of the steward, Christ intimateth to us, that wise preparers, when they go hence, are received into the everlasting habitations; as he there further tells us Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom.

Sect. 3. Goodness is *primaria et mensurans, vel secundaria et mensurata*: the first is God's perfect essence and will: the

second is either properly and simply good, or analogical. The former is the creature's conformity to the will of God, or its pleasingness to his will: the latter is, 1. The greater, which is the welfare or perfection of the universe. 2. The lesser, which is the several parts of the universe, either, 1. In the nobler respect, as they are parts contributing to the perfection of the whole; or, 2. In the lower respect, as they are perfect or happy in themselves, or, 3. In the lowest respect of all, as they are good to their fellow-creatures which are below themselves.

Sect. 4. Accordingly, it is far better to be with Christ, I. Properly and simply, as it is the fulfilling of God's will. II. Analogically, as it tendeth to the perfection of the universe and the church. III. And as it will be our own good or felicity. IV. And as it will be good to our inferior fellow-creatures; though this last be most questionable, and seemeth not included in the meaning of this text. Somewhat of these in order.

Sect. 5. I. It is an odious effect of idolatrous selfishness, to acknowledge no goodness above our own felicity, and, accordingly, to make the goodness of God to be but formally his usefulness, benevolence, and beneficence, to his creatures, which is by making the creature the ultimate end, and God but the means; to make the creature to be God, and deny God, indeed, while we honour his name: as also it is to acknowledge no higher goodness formally in the creature, than in its own felicity as such: as if neither the pleasing of God's will, nor the perfection of the church and world, were better than we are: we are not of ourselves, and therefore we are not chiefly for ourselves; and, therefore, we have a higher good to love.

That is simply best which God willeth. Therefore, to live here is best whilst I do live here; and to depart is best when the time of my departure cometh: that is best which is, for it is the work of God: the world cannot be better at this instant than it is, nor any thing better, which is of God, because it is as he willeth it to be: but when God hath changed them, it will then be best that they are changed. Were there no other good in my departure hence, but this simple good, the fulfilling of God's will, my reason telleth me that I should be fully satisfied in it: but there is also a subordinate sort of good.

Sect. 6. II. For my change will tend to the perfection of the universe; even that material good or perfection, which is its aptitude for the use to which God hath created, and doth pre-

serve it: as all the parts, the modes, the situation, the motions, of a clock, a watch, or other engine, do to the ends of the artificer. Though God hath not told me particularly, why every thing, and mode, and motion, is as it is, I know it is all done in perfect wisdom, and suited to its proper use and end: if the hen or bird knoweth how to make her nest, to lay her eggs secretly together, when and how to sit on them till they are hatched, and how to feed them and preserve them, and when to forsake them, as sufficient for themselves without her help, &c. If the bee knoweth when, and whence, and how, to gather her honey and wax, and how to form the repository combs, and how to lay it up, and all the rest of her marvellous economy, shall I think that God doth he knoweth not what, or what is not absolutely the best? Doth he want either skill, or will, or power?

And should the stone grudge to be hewed, the brick to be burnt, the trees to be cut down, and sawed and framed, the lead and iron to be melted, &c., when it is but to form an useful edifice, and to adapt and compose every part to the perfecting of the whole?

Shall the waters grudge that they must glide away, and the plants that they must die, and half die every winter, and the fruits and flowers that they must fall, or the moon that it must have its changing motions, or the sun that it must rise and set so oft, &c., when all is but the action and order which maketh up that harmony and perfection which was designed by the Creator, and is pleasing to his will?

Sect. 7. III. But lawful self-love is yet further herein gratified: the goodness expressed in the text is that analogical, subordinate good, which is *mihi bonum*, my own felicity, and that which tendeth thereunto: it is most reasonable to love God best, and that next which is likest him (if known), and why should it not be the easiest and the sweetest? But experience findeth it so easy to love ourselves, that certainly, if I firmly believe that it is best for me, I shall desire to depart, and to be with Christ. And have I not reason to believe it?

Sect. 8. The reasons of it I will consider in this order: I. The general reason from the efficient and the means. II. The final reasons. III. The constitutive reasons from the state of my intellect, and its action and fruition there. IV. The constitutive reasons from the state of my will. V. The constitutive

reasons from my practice there, leaving out those which the resurrection will give me, because I am speaking but of my present departure unto Christ.

Sect. 9. And, 1. That is best for me, which love itself, my heavenly Father designeth, and chooseth, for my good. I hope I shall never dare to think, or say, that he is mistaken, or that he wanted skill or love, or that I could have chosen better for myself than he doth, if he had left all to my choice. Many a time the wise and good will of God hath crossed my foolish, rebellious will on earth; and afterward I have still perceived that it was best; usually for myself, but always for a higher good than mine. It is not an enemy, nor a tyrant, that made me, that hath preserved me, and that calls me hence. He hath not used me as an enemy: the more I have tried him, the better I have found him: had I better obeyed his ruling will, how happy had I been! And is not his disposing and rewarding will as good? Man's work is like man, and evil corrupteth it; but God's work is like God, and uncorrupted: if I should not die till my dearest friend would have it, much more till I myself would choose it, (not constrained by misery,) I should rejoice, and think my life were safe! O foolish, sinful soul! if I take it not to be far better to be at God's choice, than at my own, or any man's! and if I had not rather that he choose the time than I.

Be of good cheer, then, O my soul! it is thy Father's voice that calleth thee hence: his voice that called thee into the world, and bid thee live; that called thee out of a state of sin and death, and bid thee live hereafter unto him; that called thee so oft from the grave, and, forgiving thy sins, renewed thy strength, restored thee to the comforts of his house and service; and that so graciously led thee through this howling wilderness, and brought thee almost to the sight of the promised land. And wilt thou not willingly go, when infinite, fatherly love doth call thee? art thou not desirous of his presence? art thou afraid to go to him who is the only cure of thy fears? What was it but this glory to which he did finally elect thee? Where dost thou read that he elected thee to the riches and honours of this world, or to the pleasures of the flesh? But he elected us in Christ to the heavenly inheritance. (Eph. i. 3, 4, &c.) Indeed, he elected thee also to bear the cross, and to manifold sufferings here: but is it that which thou preferrest before the crown? That was but as a means unto the kingdom, that thou mightest be

conformed to Christ, and reign with him when thou hast suffered with him. If God choose thee to blessedness, refuse it not thyself, nor behave thyself like a refuser.

Sect. 10. 2. And surely that state is my best which my Saviour purchased and promised me as best : as he bought me not with silver and gold, so neither to silver and gold : did he live and die to make me rich or advanced in the world ? Surely his incarnation, merits, sacrifice, and intercession, had a low design, if that were all ! And who hath more of these than they that have least of Christ ? But he purchased us to an incorruptible crown ; to an inheritance undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, that are kept, by God's power, through faith unto salvation. (1 Pet. i.) And is it heaven that cost so dear a price for me, and is the end of so wonderful a design of grace, and shall I be unwilling now to receive the gift ?

Sect. 11. 3. That sure is best for me, for which God's holy Spirit is preparing me ; that for which he is given to believers ; and that which is the end of all his holy operations on my soul. But it is not to love this world that he is persuading me from day to day ; but to come off from such love, and to set my heart on the things above. Is it to love this life and fleshly interest, this vanity and vexation, or rather to love the invisible perfection, that this blessed Spirit hath done so much to work my heart ? And would I now undo all, or cross and frustrate all his operations ? Hath grace been so long preparing me for glory, and shall I be loth to take possession of it ? If I am not willing, I am not yet sufficiently prepared.

Sect. 12. 4. If heaven be not better for me than earth, God's word and ordinances have been all in vain ? Surely that is my best which is the gift of the better covenant, and which is secured to me by so many sealed promises, and which I am directed to by so many sacred precepts, doctrines, and examples ; and for which I have been called to hear, and read, and meditate, and pray, and watch so long. Was it the interest of the flesh on earth, or a longer life of worldly prosperity, which the gospel covenant secured to me ; which the sacraments and Spirit sealed to me ; which the bible was written to direct me to ; which ministers preached to me ; which my books were written for ; which I prayed for ; and for which I served God ? Or was it not for his grace on earth, and glory in heaven ? And is it not better for me to have the end of all these means, than

lose them all, and lose my hopes? Why have I used them, if I would not attain their end?

Sect. 13. 5. That is my best state, which all the course of God's fatherly providences tend to: all his sweeter mercies, and all his sharper corrections, are to make me partaker of his holiness, and to lead me to glory in the way that my Saviour and all his saints have gone before me: all things work together for the best to me, by preparing me for that which is best, indeed. Both calms and storms are to bring me to this harbour: if I take them but for themselves, and this present life, I mistake them, and understand them not, but unthankfully vilify them, and lose their end, and life, and sweetness: every word and work of God; every day's mercies, and changes, and usages, do look at heaven, and intend eternity. God leadeth me no other way: if I follow him not, I forsake my hope in forsaking him: if I follow him, shall I be unwilling to be at home, and come to the end of all this way?

Sect. 14. 6. Surely that is best for me which God hath required me principally to value, love, and seek, and that as the business of all my life, referring all things else thereto: that this is my duty, I am fully certain, as is proved elsewhere, and before. Is my business in the world only for the things of this world? How vain a creature, then, were man; and how little were the difference between waking and sleeping! Life and death: no wonder if he that believeth that there is no life but this to seek or hope for do live in uncomfortable despair, and only seek to palliate his misery with the brutish pleasures of a wicked life, and if he stick at no villany which his fleshly lusts incline him to; especially tyrants and multitudes who have none but God to fear. It is my certain duty to seek heaven with all the fervour of my soul, and diligence of my life; and is it not best to find it?

Sect. 15. 7. That must needs be best for me, which all other things must be forsaken for: it is folly to forsake the better for the worse: but Scripture, reason, and conscience, tell me, that all this world, when it stands in competition, or opposition, should be forsaken for heaven; yea, for the least hopes of it: a possible, everlasting glory should be preferred before a certainly perishing vanity. I am sure this life will shortly be nothing to me; and therefore it is next to nothing now. And must I forsake all for my everlasting hopes, and yet be unwilling to pass unto the possession of them.

Sect. 16. 8. That is like to be our best which is our maturest state. Nature carrieth all things towards their perfection : our apples, pears, grapes, and every fruit, are best when they are ripe ; and though they then hasten to corruption, that is, through the incapacity of the corporeal materials, any longer to retain the vegetative spirit, which is not annihilated at its separation ; and being not made for its own felicity, but for man's, its ripeness is the state in which man useth it, before it doth corrupt of itself, and that its corruption may be for his nutriment ; and the spirits and best matter of his said food doth become his very substance. And doth God cause saints to grow up unto ripeness, only to perish and drop down unto useless rottenness ? It is not credible. Though our bodies become but like our filthiest excrements, our souls return to God that gave them : and though he need them not, he useth them in their separated state ; and that to such heavenly uses as the heavenly maturity and mellowness hath disposed them to. Seeing, then, love hath ripened me for itself, shall I not willingly drop into its hand ?

Sect. 17. 9. That is like to be the best which the wisest and holiest, in all ages of the world, have preferred before all, and have most desired : and which also almost all mankind do acknowledge to be best at last. It is not like that all the best men in the world should be most deceived, and be put upon fruitless labours and sufferings by this deceit, and be undone by their duty ; and that God should, by such deceits, rule all (or almost all) mankind : and also that the common notices of human nature, and conscience's last and closest documents, should be all in vain. But it is past all doubt, that no men usually are worse than those that have no belief or hopes of any life but this : and that none are so holy, just, and sober, so charitable to others, and so useful to mankind, as those that firmliest believe and hope for the state of immortality : and shall I fear that state which all that were wise and holy, in all ages, have preferred and desired ?

Sect. 18. 10. And it is not unlike that my best state is that which my greatest enemies are most against : and how much Satan doth to keep me and other men from heaven ; and how much worldly honour, and pleasure, and wealth, he could afford us to accomplish it, I need not here again be copious in reciting, having said so much of it in the 'Treatise of Infidelity.' And shall I be, towards myself, so much of Satan's mind ? He would not have me come to heaven : and shall I also be

unwilling? All these things tell me that it is best to be with Christ.

II. *The Final Reasons.*

Sect. 1. II. 1. Is it not far better to dwell with God in glory, than with sinful men, in such a world as this? Though he be every where, his glory, which we must behold to our felicity, and the perfecting operations and communications of his love are in the glorious world, and not on earth. As the eye is made to see the light, and then to see other things by the light, so is man's mind made to see God, and to love him; and other things, as in, by, and for him. He that is our beginning is our end; and our end is the first motive of all moral action, and for it it is that all means are used: and the end attained is the rest of souls. How oft hath my soul groaned under the sense of distance, and darkness, and estrangedness from God! How oft hath it looked up, and gasped after him, and said, 'Oh! when shall I be nearer and better acquainted with my God?' "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God: my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" (Psalm xlii. 1.) And would I not have my prayers heard, and my desires granted? What else is the sum of lawful prayers, but God himself? If I desire any thing more than God, what sinfulness is in those desires, and how sad is their signification. How oft have I said, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee? It is good for me to draw near to God." (Psalm lxxiii. 25, 28.) Wo to me, if I did dissemble! If not, why should my soul draw back? Is it because that death stands in the way? Do not my fellow-creatures die for my daily food; and is not my passage secured by the love of my Father, and the resurrection and intercession of my Lord? Can I see the light of heavenly glory in this darksome shell and womb of flesh?

Sect. 2. All creatures are more or less excellent and glorious, as God is more or less operative and refulgent in them, and, by that operation, communicateth most of himself unto them. Though he be immense and indivisible, his operations and communications are not equal: and that is said to be nearest to him which hath most of those operations on it; and that without the intervenient causality of any second, created cause; and so all those are in their order near unto him, as they have noblest natures, and fewest intervenient causes. Far am I from pre-

suming to think that I am, or shall be, the best and noblest of God's creatures, and so that I shall be so near him as to be under the influx of no second or created causes, of which more anon. But to be as near as my nature was ordained to approach, is but to attain the end and perfection of my nature.

Sect. 3. And as I must not look to be the nearest to him, as he is the first efficient, no more must I, as he is the first dirigent, or governing cause. As now I am under the government of his officers on earth, I look for ever to be under sub-governors in heaven. My glorified Saviour must be my Lord and ruler, and who else under him I know not. If angels are not equal in perfection, nor, as is commonly supposed, equal in power, nor without some regimental order among themselves, I must not conclude that no created angel or spirit shall have any government over me, but it will be so pure and divine, as that the blessed effects of God's own government will be sweetly powerful therein. If the law was given by angels, and the angel of God was in the burning bush, and the angel conducted the people through the wilderness, and yet all these things are ascribed to God, much more near and glorious will the divine regiment there be, whoever are the administrators.

Sect. 4. And as I must expect to be under some created, efficient and dirigent causes there, so must I expect to have some subordinate ends: else there would not be a proportion and harmony in causalities. Whatever nobler creatures are above me, and have their causalities upon me, I must look to be finally for these nobler creatures. When I look up and think what a world of glorious beings are now over me, I dare not presume to think that I shall finally, any more than receptively, be the nearest unto God, and that I am made for none but him. I find here that I am made, and ruled, and sanctified, for the public or common good of many as above my own, of which I am past doubt; and I am sure that I must be, finally, for my glorified Redeemer; and for what other spiritual beings, or intelligences, that are above me, little do I know: and God hath so ordered all his creatures, as that they are mutually ends and means for and to one another, though not in an equality, nor in the same respects. But whatever nearer ends there will be, I am sure that he who is the first efficient, and dirigent, will be the ultimate, final cause: and I shall be, in this respect, as near him as is due to the rank and order of my nature. I shall be useful to the ends which are answerable to my perfection.

Sect. 5. And if it be the honour of a servant to have an honourable master, and to be appointed to the most honourable work; if it be some honour to a horse above swine, or a worm, or fly, that he serveth more nearly for the use of man, yea, for a prince, will it not be also my advancement to be ultimately for God, and subordinately for the highest created natures, and this in such services as are suitable to my spiritual and heavenly state?

Sect. 6. For I am far from thinking that I shall be above service, and have none to do, for activity will be my perfection and my rest: and all such activity must be regular in harmony, and order of causes, and for its proper use; and what, though I know not now fully what service it is that I must do, I know it will be good and suitable to the blessed state which I shall be in; and it is enough that God and my Redeemer know it; and that I shall know it in due time, when I come to practise it; of which more afterward.

Sect. 7. The inordinate love of this body and present composition seduceth souls to think that all their use and work is for its maintenance and prosperity, and when the soul hath done that, and is separated from flesh, it hath nothing to do, but must lie idle, or be as nothing, or have no considerable work or pleasure. As if there were nothing in the whole world, but this little fluid mass of matter, for a soul to work upon; as if itself, and all the creatures, and God, were nothing, or no fit objects for a soul: and why not hereafter, as well as now: or, as if that which, in our compounded state, doth operate on and by its organs, had no other way of operation without them; as if the musician lost all his power, or were dead, when his instrument is out of tune, or broken, and could do nothing else but play on that: as if the fiery part of the candle were annihilated, or transmuted, as some philosophers imagine, when the candle goeth out, and were not fire, and in action still: or as if that sunbeam which I shut out, or which passeth from our horizon, were annihilated, or did nothing, when it shineth not with us. Had it no other individual to illuminate, or to terminate its beams or action, were it nothing to illuminate the common air? Though I shall not always have a body to operate in and upon, I shall always have God, and a Saviour, and a world of fellow-creatures; and when I shine not in this lantern, and see not by these spectacles, nor imaginarily in a glass, I shall yet see things suitable intuitively, and as face to face. That which

is essentially life, as a living principle, will live; and that which is essentially an active, intellectual, volitive principle, force, and virtue, will still be such while it is itself, and is not annihilated, or changed into another thing (which is not to be feared); and that which is such can never want an object till all things be annihilated.

Sect. 8. Reason assureth me, that were my will now what it should be, and fully obsequious herein to my understanding, to fulfil God's will would be the fulfilling my own will, for my will should perfectly comply with his, and to please him perfectly would be my perfect pleasure: and it is the unreasonable adhesion to this body, and sinful selfishness, which maketh any one think otherwise now. I am sure that my soul shall live, for it is life itself; and I am sure that I shall live to God, and that I shall fulfil and please his blessed will; and this is, as such, incomparably better than my felicity, as such: and yet so far as I am pleased in so doing, it will be my felicity.

Sect. 9. I begin now to think, that the strange love which the soul hath to this body (so far as it is not inordinate) is put into us of God, partly to signify to us the great love which Christ hath to his mystical, political body, and to every member of it, even the least: he will gather all his elect out of the world, and none that come to him shall be shut out, and none that are given him shall be lost: as his flesh is to them meat indeed, and his blood is to them drink indeed, and he nourisheth them for life eternal: (his Spirit in them, turning the sacrament, the word, and Christ himself, *in esse objectivo*, as believed in, into spirit and life to us, as the soul and our natural spirits turn our food into flesh, and blood, and spirits, which, in a dead body, or any lifeless repository, it would never be:) so as we delight in the ease and prosperity of our body, and each member, and have pleasure in the pleasant food that nourisheth it, and other pleasant objects which accommodate it; Christ also delighteth in the welfare of his church, and of all the faithful, and is pleased when they are fed with good and pleasant food, and when hereby they prosper: Christ loveth the church, not only as a man must love his wife, but as we love our bodies; and no man ever hated his own flesh. (Eph. v. 27, &c.) And herein I must allow my Saviour the pre-eminence, to overgo me in powerful, faithful love: he will save me better from pain and death than I can save my body: and will more inseparably hold me to himself. If it please my soul, to dwell in such a

house of clay, and to operate on so mean a thing as flesh, how greatly will it please my glorified Lord, to dwell with his glorified body, the triumphant church, and to cherish and bless each member of it! It would be a kind of death to Christ to be separated from his body, and to have it die. Whether Augustine, and the rest of the fathers, were in the right or no, who thought, that as our bodies do not only shed their hairs, but, by sicknesses and waste, lose much of their very flesh; so Christ's militant body doth not only lose hypocrites, but also some living, justified members; yet, certain it is, that confirmed members, and most certain, that glorified members, shall not be lost: heaven is not a place for Christ or us to suffer such loss in. And will Christ love me better than I love my body? Will he be more loth to lose me than I am to lose a member, or to die? Will he not take incomparably greater pleasure in animating and actuating me for ever, than my soul doth in animating and actuating this body? O, then, let me long to be with him! And though I am naturally loth to be absent from the body, let me be by his Spirit more unwilling to be absent from the Lord; and though I would not be unclothed, had not sin made it necessary, let me not groan to be clothed upon with my heavenly habitation, and to become the delight of my Redeemer, and to be perfectly loved, by love itself.

Sect. 10. And even this blessed receptivity of my soul, in terminating the love and delight of my glorified Head, must needs be a felicity to me. The insensible creatures are but beautified by the sun's communication of its light and heat; but the sensitives have also the pleasure of it. Shall my soul be senseless? Will it be a clod or stone? Shall that, which is now the form of man, be then more lifeless, senseless, or incapable, than the form of brutes is now? Doubtless, it will be a living, perceiving, sensible recipient of the felicitating love of God, and my Redeemer; I shall be loved as a living spirit, and not as a dead and senseless thing, that doth not comfortably perceive it.

Sect. 11. And if I must rejoice with my fellow-servants that rejoice, shall I not be glad to think that my blessed Lord will rejoice in me, and in all his glorified ones? Union will make his pleasure to be much mine; and it will be aptly said by him to the faithful soul, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Matt. xxv. 21.) His own active joy will objectively be ours, as ours will be efficiently his, or from him. Can that be an ill

condition to me, in which my Lord will most rejoice? it is best to him, and, therefore, best to me.

Sect. 12. And the heavenly society will joyfully welcome a holy soul. If there be now "Joy in heaven among the angels, for one sinner that repenteth," (Luke xv. 10,) who hath yet so little holiness, and so much sin; what joy will there be over a perfected, glorified soul? Surely, if our angels there behold our Father's face, they will be glad, in season, of our company. The angels that carried Lazarus to Abraham's bosom, no doubt rejoiced in their work, and their success. And is the joy of angels, and the heavenly host, as nothing to me? Will not love and union make their joy to be my own; if love here must make all my friends and neighbours comforts to become my own? And as their joy, according to their perfection, is greater than any that I am now capable of, so the participation of so great a joy of theirs will be far better than to have my little separated apartment. Surely, that will be my best condition, which angels and blessed spirits will be best pleased in, and I shall rejoice most in that which they most rejoice in.

III. *The constitutive Reasons from the intellectual State.*

III. Sect. 1. Though the tempter would persuade men, because of the case of infants in the womb, apoplectics, &c., that the understanding will be but an unactive power, when separated from these corporeal organs, I have seen before sufficient reasons to repel this temptation. I will suppose, that it will not have such a mode of conception, as it hath now by these organs; but, 1. The soul will be still essentially a vital, intellectual substance, disposed to act naturally; and that is to those acts which it is formally inclined to, as fire to illuminate and heat. And as it cannot die, (while it is what it is in essence,) because it is life itself, that is, the vital substance; so it cannot but be intellectual, (as to an inclined power,) because it is such essentially; though God can change, or annihilate any thing, if he would. 2. And it will be among a world of objects. 3. And it will still have its dependence on the first cause, and receive his continual, actuating influx. 4. And no man can give the least show of true reason, to prove that it shall cease sensation, (whether the sensitive faculties be in the same substance which is intellectual, which is most probable, or in one conjunct, as some imagine,) though the species and modes of sensation cease, which are denominated from the various organs.

5. Yea, no man can prove that the departing soul doth not carry with it its igneous spirits, which, in the body, it did immediately actuate. If it were ever so certain that those Greek fathers were mistaken, (as well as hypocrites,) who took the soul itself to be a sublime, intellectual fire.

And as to the objection some hold, that the soul pre-existed before it was in the body; others, and most, that it then received its first being: if the first were true, it would be true that the soul had its intellectual activity before, though the soul itself, incorporate, remember it not, because it operateth but *ut forma hominis*, (and its oblivion they take to be part of its penalty,) and they that think it a *radius* of the *anima mundi vel systematis*, must think that then it did intellectually animate *hunc mundum, vel mundi partem*: and to do so again, is the worst they can conjecture of it. As the rays of the sun, which heat a burning glass, and by it set a candle on fire, are the same rays still diffused in the air, and illuminating, heating, and moving it, and terminated on some other body, and not annihilated, or debilitated, when their contracted operation ceaseth by breaking the glass, or putting out the candle; and as the spirit of a tree still animateth the tree, when it retires from the leaves, and lets them fall. But this being an unproved imagination of men's own brains, we have no further use of it, than to confute themselves. But if the soul existed not till its incorporation, what wonder if it operate but *ut forma*, when it is united to the body for that use? What wonder if its initial operations, like a spark of fire in tinder, or the first lighting of a candle, be weak, and scarce by us perceptible? What wonder if it operate but to the uses that the creation did appoint it; and first, as vegetative, fabricate its own body, as the maker's instrument, and then feel, and then understand? And what wonder if it operate no further than objects are admitted? And, therefore, what wonder if, in apoplexies, &c., such operations are intercepted? But the departing soul is, 1. In its maturity. 2. No more united to this body, and so not confined to sense and imagination in its operations, and the admission of its objects. 3. And it is *sub ratione meriti*, and as a governed subject is ordinate to its reward; which it was not capable of receiving in the womb, or in an apoplexy. And as we have the reasons before alleged to hold, 1. That it shall not be annihilated. 2. Nor dissolved. 3. Nor lose its essential faculties or powers. 4. Nor those essential powers be con-

tinued useleſs by the wiſe and merciful Creator, though, by natural revelation, we know not in what manner they ſhall act; whether on any other body, and by what conjunction, and how far; ſo by ſupernatural revelation we are aſſured, that there is a reward for the righteous, and that holy ſouls are ſtill members of Chriſt, and live becauſe he liveth, and that in the day of their departure they ſhall be with him in Paradife, and being abſent from the body, ſhall be preſent with the Lord; and that Chriſt, therefore, died, roſe, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living, that is, of thoſe that, being dead, hence do live with him, and of thoſe that yet live in the body; for he that ſaid, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," that is, ſtands not related to them as his people, as a king to his ſubjects, is not himſelf the Lord of the abſolute dead, but of the living.

Therefore, (as *Contarenius* againſt *Pomponatius de Immortal. Anim.* ſaith,) the immortality of the ſoul is proveable by the light of nature, but the manner of its future operation muſt be known by faith. And bleſſed be the Father of ſpirits, and our Redeemer, who hath ſent and ſet up this excellent light, by which we ſee further than purblind infidels can do!

Sect. 2. But I deny not but even the Scripture itſelf doth tell us but little of the manner of our intellection when we are out of the body; and it is not improbable that there is more imperfection in this mode of notional, organical, abſtractive knowledge which the ſoul exerciſeth in the body, than moſt conſider of. And that as the eye hath the viſive faculty in ſleep, and when we wink, and an internal action of the viſive ſpirits, (no doubt,) and yet ſeeh not any thing without till the eyelids are opened, (and was not made to ſee its own ſight,) ſo the ſoul in the body is as a winking eye to all things that are not, by the ſenſe and imagination, intromitted, or brought within its reach. And whether (*sicut non video viſum, neque facultatem neque ſubſtantiam videntem, videndo tamen certo percipio me videre*, ſo it may be ſaid, *Non intelligo immediate ipſam intellectionem, neque facultatem, aut ſubſtantiam intelligentem. Intelligendo tamen certo percipio me intelligere, quia actus intellectus in ſpiritus ſenſitivos operans ſentitur*; or whether we muſt further ſay, with Ockam, that *Intellectus tum intuitivè tum abſtractivè ſe intelligit*, I leave to wiſer men to judge, but I am very ſuſpicious that the body is more a lantern to the ſoul than ſome will admit; and that this *Lusus notionum ſecundarum*, or abſtractive

knowledge of things by organical images, names, and notions, is occasioned by the union of the soul with the body *ut formæ*, and is that childish knowledge which the apostle saith shall be done away. And how much of man's fall might consist in such a knowing of good and evil, I cannot tell, or in the overvaluing such a knowledge. And I think that when vain philosophy at Athens had called the thoughts and desires of mankind from great realities to the logical and philological game at words and notions, it was Socrates' wisdom to call them to more concerning studies, and Paul's greater wisdom to warn men to take heed of such vain philosophy, and to labour to know God and Jesus Christ, and the things of the Spirit, and not to over-value this ludicrous, dreaming, worldly wisdom. And if I have none of this kind of notional, childish knowledge when I am absent from the body, the glass and spectacles may then be spared, when I come to see with open face, or as face to face. Our future knowledge is usually, in Scripture, called seeing. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matt. v. 8.) "We shall see face to face." (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) "We shall see him as he is." (1 John iii. 2.) "Father, I will that those which thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me," &c. (John xvii. 24.) An intuitive knowledge of all things, as in themselves immediately, is a more excellent sort of knowledge than this, by similitudes, names, and notions, which our learning now consisteth in, and is but an art acquired by many acts and use.

Sect. 3. If the sun were, as the heathens thought it, an intellectual animal, and its emitted rays were vitally visive, and when one of those rays were received by prepared seminal matter (as in insects) it became the soul of an inferior animal, in this case, the said ray would operate in that insect, or animal, but according to the capacity of the recipient matter; whereas the sun itself, by all its emitted rays, would see all things intellectually, and with delight, and when that insect were dead, that ray would be what it was, an intellectual, intuitive emanation. And though the soul in flesh do not know itself how it shall be united to Christ, and to all other holy souls, and to God himself, nor how near, or just of what sort that union will be, yet united it will be, and therefore will participate accordingly of the universal light or understanding to which it is united. The soul now, as it is, or operateth, in the foot or hand, doth not understand, but only as it is, and operateth, in the head. And

yet the same soul which is in the hand, understandeth in the head, and the soul operateth not so selfishly or dividedly in the hand as to repine there because it understandeth not there; but it is quiet in that it understandeth in the head, and performeth its due operation in the hand. But this diversity of operations seemeth to be from the organs, and body's use, or need, but souls dismissed from the body seem to be as all eye; or intuitive light. Therefore, though it might content us to say that our Head seeth all things, and we are united to him, yet we may say further, that we ourselves shall see God, and all things that are meet for us to see.

Sect. 4. And seeing it is most certain that the superior glorious regions are full of blessed spirits, who do see God and one another, having much more perfect operations than we have, (whose effects we mortals find here below,) why should I, that find an intellective nature in myself, make any doubt of my more perfect operations when I am dismissed hence, being satisfied that a soul will not lose its simple essence? Either those superior spirits have ethereal bodies to act in (or are such themselves) or not. If they are, or have such, why should I doubt of the like, and think that my substance or vehicle will not be according to the region of my abode? If not, why should I think that my departed soul may not know or see without an igneous or ethereal body or vehicle, as well as all those worlds of spirits. And the certainty of apparitions, possessions, and witches, do tell us, not only that there are such inhabitants of other regions, ordinarily invisible to us, but also that we are in the way to that happiness or misery which is in our invisible state.

Sect. 5. These things reviewed, (being partly mentioned before,) assuring me that I shall have actual intellection in my separated state, the region, with the objects, but, above all, the holy Scriptures, will tell me as much as it is meet that I should here know, what it is that I shall intuitively understand. The apostle (1 Cor. xiii. 10—12.) doth distinguish our knowing in part, and knowing perfectly, knowing as a child, and as a man, knowing darkly and enigmatically, as in a glass, and knowing face to face as we are known. The great question is, when this time of perfection is? Whether he mean at death, or at the resurrection. If the observation of Dr. Hammond and Mr. Beverly, in his 'Great Soul of Man,' hold, that *ἀνάσσει* in Scripture, when 'the flesh or body' is not joined with it, signifies that life which the soul doth enter upon immediately after our death, and so

that the soul hath that (after living) which is signified by the very word which we translate *resurrection*, then it will lead men to think that there is less difference between man's state at his first departure, and at his last resurrection, than most think, even than Calvin himself thought. But the difference between our first and last state of after-life or resurrection cannot be now distinctly known. What difference there is now between Enoch, Elias, and those who rose at Christ's resurrection, and the rest of the saints, even the spirits of the perfected just, and whether the first have as much greater glory than the rest, as it is conceived that we shall have at the resurrection above that which immediately followeth death, what mortal man can tell? I am past doubt that flesh and blood (formally so called, and not only *ab accidente*, as sinful) shall not inherit the kingdom of God, (*vid.* Hammond *in loc.*) but that our natural bodies shall be made spiritual bodies: and how a spiritual body differeth from a spirit or soul, I pretend not well to understand, but must stay till God, by experience, or fuller light, inform me. But surely the difference is not like to be so great, as that a soul in flesh shall know in part, and a soul in a spiritual body shall know perfectly, and a soul between both shall not know at all. If it be perfection which we shall have in our spiritual body, it is like that we are nearer to that perfection, in knowledge and felicity, while we are between both, than when we are in the flesh.

Sect. 6. And sure a soul that (even Solomon saith) goeth upward, and to God that gave it, is liker to know God than that which is terminated in flesh, and operateth *ut forma*, according to its capacity and state; and a soul that is with Christ, is liker to know Christ, and the Father in him, than that which is present with the body, and absent from the Lord. What less can the promise of being with him signify?

Sect. 7. And, 1. As to the kind of knowledge, how excellent and more satisfactory a way will that of intuition, or intellectual sense, be, than is our present way of abstraction, similitudes, and signs. What abundance of time, thoughts, and labour, doth it cost us now to learn our grammar, our rhetoric, and our logic. Our *artes loquendi, dicendi and disserendi*; to learn our wordy rules and axioms, in metaphysics, physics, &c. And when we have learned them all, (if all can be learned,) how little the nearer are many to the knowing of the signified realities. We oft get but a set of words to play with, to take up our time, and divert us from the matter; even as carnal men use the creatures which

signify God, and are made to lead them up to him, to entangle them, and be the greatest and most pernicious diversion of their souls from God; so do too many learned men do by their organical, signal knowledge. They use it as men do cards, and romances, and plays, to delight their fancies, but they know less of the things that are worth their knowing, than many unlearned persons do, as I said before. Had not much of the Athenian learning been then a mere game, for men to play away their precious time at, and to grow proud of, while they were ignorant of saving realities, Christ and his apostles had not so much neglected it as they did, nor Paul so much warned men to take heed of being deceived by that vain kind of philosophy, in which he seemeth to me to have greater respect to the universally esteemed Athenian arts, than, as Dr. Hammond thought, to the mere gnostic pretensions.

This poor, dreaming, signal, artificial knowledge is, 1. Costly. 2. Uncertain. 3. Contentious. 4. Unsatisfactory, in comparison of intuitive knowledge.

1. It is costly, as to the hard labour and precious time which must be laid out for it, as aforesaid. We grow old in getting us horses, and boots, and spurs, for our journey, and it is well if we begin it at the last; like a man that would study the new-found planets, and the shape of Saturn's and Jupiter's satellites, and the *Viam Lacteam*, &c.; and he spends his whole life in getting him the best tubes, or telescopes, and never useth them to his ends; or like one that, instead of learning to write, doth spend his life in getting the best ink, paper, and pens; or rather like one that learneth to write and print exactly, and not to understand what any of his words do signify. Men take their spectacles instead of eyes.

2. And when this learning is got, how uncertain are we whether the words have no ambiguity; whether they give us the true notice of the speaker's mind, and of the matter spoken of. As I said before, what penury, and yet redundancy of words have we: of how various and uncertain signification; changed by custom, or arbitrary design; sometimes by the vulgar use, and sometimes by learned men that, being conscious of the defectiveness of the speaking art, are still tampering, and attempting to amend it. And some men speak obscurely on purpose, to raise in their readers a conceit of their subtle and sublime conceptions. And he that understandeth things most clearly, and speaketh them most plainly, (which are the parts of

true learning,) shall have much ado to get the matter out of dark and bewildering uncertainties, and to make others understand both it and him.

3. And hence come the greatest part of the contentions of the world, which are hottest among men that most pretend to wordy knowledge; as in traffic and converse, the more men and business we have to do with, usually the more quarrels and differences we have; so the more of this wordy learning, instead of realities, men pretend to, the more disputes and controversies they make; and the instruments of knowledge prove the instruments of error and contention. And, alas! how many applauded volumes are the snares and troublers of the world! and how great a part of our libraries are vain janglings, and strife of words, and traps for the more ingenious sort, that will not be taken with cards and dice, robbing us of our time, destroying our love, depressing our minds, that should ascend to God, and diverting them from the great and holy things which should be the matter of our thoughts and joys; and filling the church with sects and strife, while every one striveth for the pre-eminence of his wit and notions, and few strive for holy love, and unity, and good works.

4. And all this while, alas! too many learned men do but lick the outside of the glass, and leave the wine within untasted. To know God, and Christ, and heaven, and holiness, do give the soul a nourishing and strengthening kind of pleasure, like that of the appetite in its food; but this game at words is but a knowing of images, signs, and shadows, and so is but an image and shadow of true knowledge. It is not that grace which Austin's definition saith, *Nemo male utitur*; but it is that which the sanctified use well, and the unsanctified are puffed up by, and use to the opposition of truth, the ostentation of a foolish wit, and the deceit of their own souls. And if it be sanctified knowledge, it is but mediate, in order to our knowledge of things thus signified; and it is the real good which contenteth and beatifieth, though the notions may be a subordinate recreation; and intuition feasteth on these realities.

Sect. 9. II. And as to the objects of this intuition, their excellency will be the excellency of our knowledge. I. I shall know God better. II. I shall know the universe better. III. I shall know Christ better. IV. I shall know the church, his body, better, with the holy angels. V. I shall better know the methods and perfection of the Scripture, and all God's dirigent

word and will. VI. I shall know the methods and sense of disposing providence better. VII. I shall know the divine benefits, which are the fruits of love, better. VIII. I shall know myself better. IX. I shall better know every fellow-creature, which I am concerned to know. X. And I shall better know all that evil, sin, Satan, and misery, from which I am delivered.

Sect. 10. I. Aquinas, and many others, took it for the chief, natural proof of the soul's immortality, that man, by nature, desireth not only to know effects, and second causes, but to rise up to the knowledge of the first cause; and, therefore, was made for such knowledge in the state of his perfection; but grace hath much more of this desire than nature. Not that we must not be content to be without a great deal of knowledge, which would be unmeet for us, useless, troublesome, or dangerous to us; nor must we aspire to that which is above our capacity, and to know the unsearchable things of God; but not to know God, is to know nothing; and to have an understanding worse than none. I presume not to pry into the secrets of the Almighty, nor to pretend to know more of God than, indeed, I do; but, O that I might know more of his glorious perfections, of his will, and love, and ways, with that knowledge which is eternal life! Blessed be that love that sent the Son of God from heaven, to reveal him to us in the gospel, as he hath done; but all that hear the same words, and believe them, have not the same degree of light or faith. If an angel from heaven came down on earth to tell us all of God that we would know, and might lawfully desire and ask him, who would not turn his back on libraries, and universities, and learned men, to go and discourse with such a messenger? What travel should I think too far, what cost too great, for one hour's talk with such a messenger? But we must have here but such intimations as will exercise faith, and excite desire, and try us under the temptations of the world and flesh. The glorious light is the reward of the victory obtained by the conduct of the light of grace. God, in great mercy, even here beginneth the reward. They that are true to the initial light, and faithfully follow on to know the Lord, do find, usually, such increase of light (not of vain notions, but of quickening and comforting knowledge of God) as greatly encourageth them still on to seek for more. It is very pleasant here to increase in holy knowledge, though it usually bring an increase of malignant opposition, and so of

sorrows to the flesh. The pleasure that the mind hath in common knowledge, brings men through a great deal of labour to attain it. How many years' travel over land and sea do some men take, to see and know more of this lower world; though it is little that they bring home, but more acquaintance with sin, and vanity, and vexation. How many more years do thousands spend in the reading multitudes of tedious volumes, that they may know what others knew before them. Printers and booksellers live by our desire of knowledge. What soul, then, on earth can possibly conceive how great a pleasure it will be for a glorified soul to see the Lord? Though I cannot now conceive what that intuition of God himself will be, and whether it will not be a glorious kind of concluding or abstractive knowledge; whether the glory which we shall see be only a created appearance of God, or be his very essence, it satisfieth me that it will be as perfect a knowledge as is fit for me to desire; and I shall then desire no more than is fit: and what it is I shall then know by itself, for it is not otherwise to be clearly known. And all the pleasure that I shall have in heaven, in knowing any of the works of God, will be in my beholding God himself, his being, his vital power and action, his wisdom, and his love and goodness, in those works; for he is the life and glory of them all. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

II. And, doubtless, it will be no small part of my delight to see and know God's perfect works, I mean the universe itself. I cannot say that I shall have so large a capacity as to comprehend all the world, or know it perfectly, and with an adequate knowledge; but I shall know it in such perfection as is suitable to my capacity. It is exceeding pleasant to know the least particles of the works of God. With what diligence and delight have men endeavoured to anatomise a body, yea, a small part of a carcass, and to know and describe poor worms and insects, plants and minerals; and no man ever yet perfectly knew the least of them all. No herbalist or physician ever yet knew the nature and uses of any one herb with an adequate knowledge. With what delight and diligence are physical searches carried on in the world, though still we are all but groping in the dark, and ignorant of many things for one that we know, and, therefore, know no one perfectly, because we are ignorant of the rest. But if, indeed, we were above our dreaming, erroneous hypothesis, and saw the nature of every creature,

even in sea and land—this little spot of God's creation, and the compages of all, oh! what a delightful spectacle would it be! How much more to see the whole creation, yea, or one vortex or system of the globes, and to know their union and communion. and to behold their beauteous symmetry, and hear them, in concord and melodious harmony, praising the glory of their great, wise, amiable Creator. This were a delectable sight indeed. I shall have as much of this as I shall be capable of; and the wonders and glories of the works of God shall wrap up my soul in admiring, joyful praise for ever: and though here it be but little of God's works that we know, I have great reason to think that it will be far otherwise there. 1. Because the state of perfection must far excel our dark and infaut state of imperfection. We have now desires after such a knowledge. His works are great, sought out of them that have pleasure therein: and these desires, being of God, shall not be frustrate. 2. Because there will be a proportionableness of the parts of our perfection; and therefore, as our love to God and his works will be there perfected, so will be our knowledge. 3. Because we shall know God himself as much as we are capable, and therefore we shall know his works in him, or by a subordinate knowledge, the less being in the greater. 4. Because God hath made his works to be known to his glory: but it is little that is here known of them by mortals; therefore they are known by them in heaven, who are fitted to improve that knowledge to his praise.

If Christ, who is the wisdom of God, will teach me the true philosophy, how to love God, and live here in all well-pleasing unto him, I shall quickly, in heaven, be a perfect philosopher; and experience will tell me that the surest way to be truly learned, and know the wonderful works of God, was to know, love, and serve the great Creator; and in him we shall have all, and without him we know nothing, and have nothing at all.

Satan tempted Christ, by showing him the "kingdoms and glory of the world," and promising them all to him if he would have worshipped him: but God will show me more than Satan could show, and give me more of that which is best, than Satan could give.

III. And that in heaven I shall better know Jesus Christ, and all the mystery of our redemption by him, will not be the least of my felicity; for in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom: and to know the mystery of his eternal godhead, in the second

person, and his created nature, and the union of these, and to see God's wonderful design and work of grace in him laid open to our clearest view, O what beatifying knowledge would this be! All dark texts concerning his person, his office, and his works, will then be expounded and fully understood. All those strange and difficult things which were the great exercise and honour of faith, will then be plain. Difficulties will no more be Satan's advantage to tempt us to unbelief, or doubting. The sight of the glory of my Lord will be my glory. (John xvii. 24.) If Paul had not then attained to perfection in the knowledge of Christ, and the power of his resurrection, but was pressing forward to reach that crown in the life to come, which he calleth "the resurrection of the dead," (Phil. iii. 9—12,) such as I must not expect here to attain it; but when that which is perfect is come, this imperfect knowledge of faith will be done away, as childish knowledge is in manhood: and the glass and riddle shall be laid aside, when we "shall see face to face, and shall know as we are known," (1 Cor. xiii. 10—12,) as to our sight and knowledge of Christ and his triumphant body: for I dare not apply that phrase to the sight and knowledge of the divine essence, nor yet deny it.

If now, though we see not Christ, yet, believing, we love him, and rejoice in him with unspeakable, glorying joy. What love and joy will the everlasting sight of our blessed Head excite there in the souls of all the glorified!

IV. I shall better, oh! much better, know the heavenly Jerusalem, the triumphant church, the blessed angels, and glorified saints; and as my love to them, so my knowledge of them, will not be the least part of my heavenly delight. As strangely as I now look upward to that world, because I cannot see it with these eyes, it shall be my well-known everlasting habitation. Oh! what a sight, what a joyful sight, will death show me by drawing aside the veil, or rather the Lord of Life, by turning death to my advantage! When I am there at home, I shall no more think with confusion, fear, or doubting, of that blessed place or state. My fears, which now come from the smallness of my faith, will end when faith is turned into vision. As I know the several rooms in my house, and houses in the street, and streets in the city, so shall I then know the many mansions which Christ hath said are in his Father's house. Words now give me so poor, imperfect a conception of the world and things which I never saw, as that sometimes I can

scarcely tell whether the joy of my faith, or the trouble of my dark apprehensions, be the greater. But when I shall see the place and persons, the glory which I heard of, that will be the delightful satisfying and possessing kind of knowledge. If Nehemiah, and the godly Jews, made so great a matter of seeing the walls of Jerusalem repaired; and others, of the imperfect re-edifying of the temple, O what a joyful sight to me will the heavenly Jerusalem then be! The most glorious sight will be at the great marriage-day of the Lamb, when Christ shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that now believe: but the next to that will be the day of my particular deliverance, when I shall come to Christ, and see the saints admiring him in glory.

If I were of the opinion of those Greek fathers, who thought that stars were angels, or had intellectual souls, (matters unknown to us,) I should love them as my guardians, and take it to be yet more of my concernment to be advanced to the fuller knowledge of them. But seeing I know that angels love us, and by office do attend and keep us, and rejoice at our good, and at our repentance, and, which is far more, are more holy and excellent creatures than we are, it is, therefore, my comfort to think that I shall better know them, and live in near and perpetual acquaintance and communion with them, a more sensible and sweet communion than we can have with them here. Devils are aerial, and near to this dark and sinful world, and oftener appear to men than angels. But the angels affect not such descending appearances, till love and obedience to their Lord make it pleasing to them: and therefore we have but little knowledge, even of those that know, and love, and keep us. But when we come home to their nearest society and converse, to know them will be sweet and joyful knowledge: for they are more excellent creatures than the most glorious that are below the intellective nature. They are full of light, and full of love to God and man. Had God bid me pray to them, I would not have refused it, but taken it for my honour; but seeing he hath not, I will do that which he hath bid me, even love them, and rejoice in my relation to the innumerable company of them, in the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, (Heb. xii. 22,) and long to know and love them more; expecting, ere long, to bear my part in the praises of God and of the Lamb, in the same choir where they are the precentors.

And that I shall know the spirits of the perfected just, and be of their communion, will be no small addition to my joy. How sweet hath one wise and holy, though weak and blemished, companion been to me here on earth! And how lovely have God's graces in such, though sullied, appeared to me. Oh! then, what a sight will it be when we shall see the millions of souls that shine in perfect wisdom and holiness with Christ. To see a garden that hath some beautiful flowers in it, is something: but if you saw whole fields and countries shining with them, it would be a glory, though fading, to the earth. A well-built city is a pleasanter sight than a single house, and a navy than a ship, and an army than one man. And if this poor, low world did all consist of wise, and just, and holy persons, O what an orderly, lovely world would it be! If one kingdom consisted (prince, magistrates, pastors, and people) all of such, what a blessed kingdom would that be. The plague of wicked men's deceits, and falsehoods, oppressions, and iniquities, may help to make us sensible of this. It would be a great temptation to us to be loth to die, and leave such a country, were it not that the more the beauty of goodness appeareth, the more the state of perfection is desired. It is pleasant to me to pray in hope, as Christ hath commanded me, that earth may be made liker unto heaven, which now is become so like to hell. But when I shall see the society perfected in number, in holiness, in glory, in heavenly employment, the joyful praises of Jehovah, the glory of God, and the Lamb shining on them, and God rejoicing over them as his delight, and myself partaking of the same, that will be the truly blessed day. And why doth my soul, imprisoned in flesh, no more desire it?

V. I shall better understand all the word of God, the matter, and the method of it: though I shall not have that use for it as I have now in this life of faith, yet I shall see more of God's wisdom and his goodness, his love, mercy, and justice, appearing in it, than ever man on earth could do! As the creatures, so the Scriptures, are perfectly known only by perfect spirits. I shall then know how to solve all doubts, and reconcile all seeming contradictions, and to expound the hardest prophecies: that light will show me the admirable methods of those sacred words, where dark minds now suspect confusion! How evident and clear then will every thing appear to me? Like a small print when the light comes in, which I could not read in the glimmering twilight. How easily shall I then con-

fute the cavils of all our present unbelievers ! and how joyfully shall I praise that God and Saviour that gave his church so clear a light to guide them through this darksome world, and so sure a promise to support them till they came to life eternal ! How joyfully shall I bless him that by that immortal seed did regenerate me to the hopes of glory, and that ruled me by so holy and just a law !

VI. In that world of light I shall better understand God's present and past works of providence, by which he ordereth the matters of this world : the wisdom and goodness of them is little understood in little parcels ; it is the union and harmony of all the parts which showeth the beauty of them, when the single parcels seem deformed, or are not understood. And no one can see the whole together but God, and they that see it in the light of his celestial glory : it is a prospect of that end, by which we have here any true understanding of such parcels as we see. Then I shall know clearly why, or to what use, God prospered the wicked, and tried the righteous by so many afflictions : I shall know why he set up the ungodly, and put the humble under their feet ; why he permitted so much ignorance, ungodliness, pride, lust, oppression, persecution, falsehood, deceit, and other sins in the world : I shall know why the faithful are so few ; and why so many kingdoms of the world are left in heathenism, Mahometanism, and infidelity. The strange permissions which now so puzzle me, and are the matter of my astonishment, shall all be then as clear as day : I shall know why God disposed of me as he did through all my life ; and why I suffered what I did ; and how many great deliverances I had, which I understood not here, and how they were accomplished. All our misinterpretations of God's works and permissions will be then rectified : and all our controversies about them, which Satan hath made so great advantage of, (by a pretended zeal for some truths of God,) will then be reconciled, and at an end : and all the works of Divine Providence, from the beginning of the world, will then appear a most delectable, beautiful frame.

VII. And among all these works, I shall specially know more the nature and excellency of God's mercies and gifts of love, which here we too unthankfully undervalued and made light of. The special works of love should be the matter of our most constant, sweet, and serious thoughts, and the fuel of our constant love and gratitude : the lively sense of love and mercy maketh

lively Christians, abounding in love to God, and mercy to others: but the enemy of God and man most laboureth to obscure, diminish, and disgrace God's love and mercies to us, or to make us disrelish them, that they may be unfruitful, as to their excellent ends and uses. Little do most Christians know how much they wrong God and themselves, and how much they lose by the diminutive, poor thoughts which they have of God's mercies: ingratitude is a grievous misery to the sinner, as gratitude is a very pleasant work. Many a thousand mercies we now receive, which we greatly undervalue. But when I come to the state and work of perfect gratitude, I shall have a more perfect knowledge of all the mercies which ever I received in my life, and which my neighbours, and friends, and God's church, and the world, did ever receive: for though the thing be past, the use of it is not past. Mercies remembered must be the matter of our everlasting thanks: and we cannot be perfectly thankful for them, without a perfect knowledge of them: the worth of a Christ, and all his grace, the worth of the gospel, the worth of our church privileges, and all God's ordinances, the worth of our books and friends, and helps of our life and health, and all conveniences, will be better understood in heaven than the most holy and thankful Christian here understandeth them.

VIII. And it will be some addition to my future happiness, that I shall then be much better acquainted with myself; both with my nature, and with my sin and grace. I shall then better know the nature of a soul, and its formal faculties (three in one): I shall know the nature and way of its operations, and how far its acts are simple, or compound, or organical. I shall know how far memory, fancy, and sense, internal and external, belong to the rational soul, and whether the sensitive and rational are two or one; and what senses will perish, and what not. I shall know how the soul doth act upon itself, and what acts it hath that are not felt in sleep, in apoplexies, and in the womb. I shall know whether the vegetative nature be any thing else than fire; and whether it be of the same essence with the soul (sensitive or rational); and whether fire *eminenter* be a common fundamental substance of all spirits, diversely specified by the forms, (mental, sensitive, and vegetative,) or whether it be as a body or vehicle to spirits, or rather a nature made for the copulation of spirits and bodies, and the operation of the former on the latter, as between both: and whether fire (and of what sort) be the active *forma teluris*, and of other globes:

I shall know how far souls are one, and yet many, and how they are individuate; and whether their *quantitas discreta*, in being numerically many, do prove that they have any *quantitatem continuam*, and whether they are a purer sort of bodies, as the Greek fathers, Tertullian, and others, thought, and what immateriality signifieth; and what substantiality of spirits; and how *substantia* and *materia* differ; and how far they are penetrable and indivisible; and whether a soul be properly *pars*; and whether individual souls are parts of any common soul; and how far the individuation doth continue; and whether, separated from the body, they operate in and by any other vehicle, or without, and how; and whether they take with them any of the fiery nature, as a vehicle, or as a constitutive part. I shall know how God produceth souls; and how his production by emanation or creation does consist with generation; and how forms are multiplied; and what causality the parent's soul hath to the production of the child's; whether by communication of substance, or only by disposing the recipient matter. I shall know whether all souls came from Adam's own substantiality; and whether there be more substance in all than in that one; and whether one substance cause more by generation; or whether it be so as to the souls of brutes; or whether any *anima communis* inform many organical bodies of the brutes, as the sun lighteth many candles which are individuate by matter to which (as parts of one) they variously are contracted, and on which they operate; and whether they were individuate in pre-existence, or shall be individuate after separation: I shall know how far the semen in generation is animated; and how the animated *semina* of two make one; and if animated, what becomes of the *anima seminis perditæ*, and of an abortive; and whether the body be animated as vegetative or sensitive before the entrance of the rational soul; or rather the same soul which in its faculty is rational, being one with the sensitive and vegetative, be the constitutive form of the first animated body, and the fabricator of its own *domicilium*. I shall know how far the soul is receptive, and what the *causa finalis* doth to it; and what each object is to the constitution or production of the act; yea, and what an act is, and what a habit; and how a soul, acting or habited, differeth from itself not acting or habited; and how its acts are many, and yet but one; or its faculties at least. Many other such difficulties will all be solved, which now philo-

sophers contend about in the dark, and pass but under doubtful conjectures ; or, at least, are known to very few.

And I shall know how God's Spirit operateth on souls ; and how it is sent from Christ's human nature to work on man ; and whether grace be properly, or only metaphorically, called a nature (a new nature, a divine nature) in us. I shall know what free-will is, and how man's will can be the first determiner of any act of its own in *specie morali* (good or evil) without being such a *causa prima*, as none but God can be : and so how far free acts are necessitated or not. I shall know what power the intellect hath on the will, and the will on the intellect ; and what power the sense and fancy hath on either ; and what any *intellectus agens* doth ; whether it be to our intellection as the sun is to our sight. I shall know what is meant by the degrees of acts and habits in the soul ; and whether there be divers degrees of substantiality, or of the *virtus vel facultas formalis* of several souls : I shall know better the difference of habits called acquired and infused ; and what common grace is, and what it doth ; and what nature can do of itself, or by common grace, without that which is proper to the justified ; and how far any degrees of grace are lost.

I shall know what measure of grace I had myself ; and how far I was mistaken in myself ; and what acts were sincere ; and how much that was not sound was mixed ; and what was of myself and sin.

I shall know much more of my sins than here I ever knew, the number and the greatness of them ; that so I may know, with greatest thankfulness and love, how much I am beholden to pardoning and healing grace.

Yea, I shall know more of my body, as it was the habitation of my soul, or the organical matter on which unitedly it worked. I shall know how far it helped or hindered me ; and what were all those obscure diseases that puzzled all the physicians, and myself ; and how marvellously God sustained, preserved, and oft delivered me ; and what of my actions was to be imputed to the body, and what of them to the soul.

IX. And every fellow-creature, which I am concerned to know, I shall know far better than now I do, both things and persons : the good and bad, the sincere and the hypocrites, will be there discerned : and many an action that here went for honourable, covered or coloured with wit or worldly advantages,

or false pretences, will then be found to be odious and unjust : and wickedness will be flattered or extenuated no more : and many a good and holy work which false men, through wickedness and worldly interest, reproached as some odious crime, will there be justified, honoured, and rewarded. All sciences are there perfect, without our ambiguous terms, or imperfect axioms, and rules of art.

X. And, lastly, I shall better know from what enemies, what sins, what dangers, I was here delivered : what contrivances and malicious endeavours of Satan and his instruments God defeated ; how many snares I escaped : and I shall better know how great my deliverance is by Christ from the wrath to come. Though we shall not know hell by painful sense, we shall know it so far as is necessary to fill us with gratitude to our Redeemer : yea, we shall know much of it far better than the damned spirits that feel it. For we shall know, by sweet and full fruition, what the joy and blessedness is which they have lost ; when they have no such kind of knowledge of it.

All this knowledge will be thus advanced to my glorified soul beyond what I can here conceive in flesh : and is it not then far better to be with Christ ?

IV. *The constitutive reasons from the state of my will.*

Sect. 1. But it is the will that is to the soul what the heart is to the body : as it is the prime seat of morality, so is it the chief seat of felicity. My greatest evil is there ; and my greatest subjective good will be there. Satan did most against it, and God will do most for it. And will it not be better to be with Christ than here ?

1. It will not there be tied to a body of cross interests and inclinations, which is now the greatest snare and enemy to my soul ; which is still drawing my love, and care, and fears, and sorrows, to and for itself, and turning them from my highest interest. How great a deliverance will it be to be freed from the temptations, and the inordinate love, and cares, and fears for this corruptible flesh !

2. My will shall not there be tempted by a world of inferior good, which is the bait and provision for the flesh, where meat, and sleep, and possessions, house, lands, and friends, are all become my snares and danger. God's mercies will not be made there the tempter's instruments. I shall not there have the flatteries or frowns, promises or threatenings, of the tyrants of the

world, to tempt me : bad company will not infect me, nor divert me : the errors of good men will not seduce me ; nor reputation or reverence of the wise, learned, or religious, draw me to imitate them in any sin.

3. I shall there have none of Satan's solicitations, to pervert my will : he will not have that advantage by my sense and fancy, nor that access unto me, as now he hath. But of this I spake before.

Sect. 2. My will shall there be better than here, I. Negatively, because, 1. There will be nothing in it that is displeasing to God : no sinful inclination, habit, or act : nothing to strive against God's Spirit ; nor grudge at any word or work of God : no principles of enmity or rebellion left. 2. There will be nothing that is against the good of others : no inclinations to injury, or any thing that is against my neighbour's or the common good. 3. There will be nothing in it that is cross to itself ; no more war or striving in me ; not a law in my mind, and a law in my members, that are contrary to each other : no crossness between sense and reason, nor between the sensitive appetite and the rational : all will be at unity and peace within.

Sect. 3. II. Positively, Christ will have finished his cure on my will. The work of sanctification will be perfect, and, I. My will shall there, by union and communion, be made comformable to the will of Christ, and so unto the Father's will. This must needs be meant (whatever more) in the prayer of Christ, where he prayeth, "That they may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us, that they may be one, even as we are one." (John xvii. 21, 22.) The will of Christ, and of the Father, will be my will, that is, I shall love and will (dispositively and actually) the same that God loveth and willeth (in the measure of a creature, infinitely below him). And if so, 1. How can the will of man have greater honour, than to be the same with the will of God? Assimilation to a king, among us poor mortals, goeth for honour ; assimilation to angels is much more. That we shall be like, or equal to, angels, is a high part of the blessed's praise ; but how much more is it, to be thus far like to God. Indeed, God's image, and the divine in us here, can be no less than this similitude to God's will in the degree that we have it. But, alas ! that degree is so very low, as that we can hardly tell whether our similitude or dissimilitude be the more ; I mean, whether our wills are for

more, that God willeth, or against more. Oh, how many thousand wishes and desires have we had, which are against the will of God! But there we shall have the full impression of God's will, upon our wills, as face answereth face in a glass, or as the wax answereth the seal; as the finger on the outside answereth to the motion of the clock within, so, in all things which belong to our duty and perfection, we shall answer the will of God. As the echo answereth the voice, defectively, but truly, without contradiction or discord, so will our wills be as the echo of God's will.

2. And then I am sure that there will be nothing in my will but good; for God willeth no evil.

3. And this will be virtually all obedience; for all sin is voluntary, and all mortal good is primarily in the will.

4. And then there can be no matter of disquiet in me, but all will be in perfect peace; for all that is like God will be pleasing, both to God and me; no troubling crossness will remain.

5. And how easy and sweet then will all my obedience be, when I shall perfectly will it, without any reluctancy or averse-ness? All will be my very pleasure that I do.

Sect. 4. II. And seeing my will shall be the same with the will of God, it followeth that it shall never be frustrate, but I shall have all whatsoever I would have, and shall be and do whatsoever I would be and do. For I shall desire nothing but what God willeth, and God's will shall certainly be done. I shall have as much love and joy as I would have; I shall be as happy as I would be; I shall desire nothing for others but it shall be done. Indeed, if God's will were there unknown to me, I might ignorantly go against it, as I do here; but there, before I will or desire any thing, I shall know whether it be God's will or not, so that I shall never wish any thing which shall not be accomplished. And as it is God's perfection to have his will always done, (though all his laws be not obeyed,) so my perfection shall consist in this likeness unto God, that my will shall be still fulfilled. And then Christ's promises will be perfectly performed, "Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Ye shall ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you." (John xv. 16, and xvi. 23, and xiv. 13, 14, and xv. 7.) While their will was the same with the will of Christ: but he saith not that it shall all be given us here. We ask for perfection, and we shall have it, but not here.

Sect. 5. III. Yea, my will itself shall be my fruition, for it shall not be the will of one in need; a desire of what I want, for I shall want nothing; therefore, it is said that we shall thirst no more: but it will be a complacency in what I do possess, and in this also my perfection will be the image of God's perfection: not but that all creatures still receive from God, and in that sense may be said to need, in that they have nothing of themselves, but all by gift and communication from him; but being still and full possessors, they cannot properly be said to want. Complacency in that which we possess is love and pleasure in one act; and, indeed, pleasure and love are the same thing. To love any thing, is to have that thing to be pleasing to my mind. Even when it is wanted, it is thought on as a pleasing thing, and therefore desired, so that the desiring act of the will is but a second act occasioned by want, and following the first act, which is complacency, or simple love. I desire it because I love it. Rightly, therefore, is the will itself called love, for in the first act, love, will, and rational appetite, are all words of the same signification. My will, therefore, must needs be perpetually full of perfect joy, when enjoying love and pleasure will be my will itself. Thus shall I have in me the spring of living waters, and the comforter will then perfectly do his work, when my constant will itself shall be comfort. Well, therefore, is glory said to be the perfection of sanctifying grace, when this grace is the beginning of that love and joy which glory is the perfection of; and perfection is the Spirit's work.

Sect. 6. IV. And it will be much of my felicity that my will shall be confirmed and fixed in this conformity to the will of God, and holy love will be its nature. Now both understanding and will are so lamentably mutable, that further than God promiseth to uphold us, we know not one day what we shall think, judge, or will the next. But when love is as a fixed nature in us, we shall be still the same, adhering to amiable goodness, without intermission or cessation. It will be as easy to us (and more) to love God and holiness, as it is to the hungry and thirsty to love meat and drink, or to the proud to love praise or domination, yea, or to any man to love his life. And we shall be no more weary of loving, than the sun is of shining, or than the hungry is of feasting, or a friend of friendly love and converse. Nay, the comparison is quite too low, for all creatures here have a fading vanity which wearieeth the satiated or failing appetite, but there is no such thing in heaven.

Sect. 7. II. And as from the nature of that act, so much more from the nature of the object, my love will appear to be my happiness. The objects (which are the matter of the act) will be these:—

1. God himself will be the full and everlasting object of my love. And he that could but understand as well as those in heaven do, what this word signifieth, ‘to love God, and be beloved of him,’ would say, that there needs no other description of perfect happiness: perfect, joyful complacency in God is the heaven which I desire and hope for. This is my felicity, and much more. As I am the agent of love to God, and the object of God’s love to me, it is my felicity. As God is the ultimate object of my love, and the agent of his love to me, (that is, of the effects of it,) so it is unspeakably more high and excellent than to be my felicity. Love is the closure of the wills of God and man, and as it is God’s part or interest, (efficiently or objectively) it is infinitely more excellent than as it is my part and interest.

Sect. 8. In God there is all that love can desire for its full, everlasting feast. 1. He is infinitely good in himself, that is, most amiable: and the nature of man’s will is to love good as good. Could we love God with a love that is adequate to the object, we should be God ourselves, which is impossible, none but God can adequately know God or love him. In God’s love to himself, both the act and object are infinite, and, indeed, are both one, there being not that formally which we know by the name of act and object; but ‘act and object’ are our analogical, inadequate conceptions of that act of God which is his essence. But in our love to God the act is finite, and infinitely below the object; yea, the object, which in reality is itself infinite, yet proximately as the *esse cognitum* is the object of our love, is finite there. It is the conception or idea of God in the intellect, which is the proper and nearest object of the will, and this is as a face in a glass, a shadow, even the finite little shadow of an infinite Being. The same infinite good is a felicity to divers persons in divers degrees, according as they diversely love him, and are receptive of his love.

Sect. 9. 2. God, who is infinitely good in himself, will be that most suitable good to me, and meetest for the dearest embraces of my will. For, 1. He hath all in himself that I need or can desire. There is no room, nothing above him, or beyond him, or without him, for love to cleave to. Though below him

the creature, though not being without him, is loved without him, by the deception of the mind.

Sect. 10. 2. He is willing to be loved by me. He disdaineth not my love. He might have refused to be embraced by such affections as have so oft and sinfully polluted themselves by embracing vanity and filth. As persons of state, and stately cleanliness, will not be touched by filthy hands, much less let dogs or dirty swine leap on them which come from wallowing in the mire. God might have driven me away from the happiness of loving him, and have denied me the leave for so high a work, but he commandeth my love, and maketh it my greatest duty. He inviteth and entreateth me, as if he were a gainer by my happiness. He seeketh to me to seek to him, and as he is the first, so is he the most earnest suitor. He is far readier to receive my love than I am to give it him. All the compassionate invitations which I have had from him here, by his word and mercies, assure me that he will there receive me readily; he that so valued my poor, cold, imperfect love to him on earth, will not reject my perfect love in heaven. He that made it the great work of his Spirit to effect it, will not refuse it when it is made perfect by himself.

Sect. 11. 3. And he is near to me, and not a distant God out of my reach, and so unsuitable to my love. Blind unbelievers may dream that he is far off, but he is as near us, even now, as we are to ourselves. He is not far from any of us, for in him we live, and move, and have our being. The light of the sun is not so near my eyes, as God will be for ever to my mind. When he would sanctify us to love him, he bringeth us nigh to him in Christ. As we love ourselves easily as being, as they say, the nearest to ourselves, so we shall as easily love God as ourselves, when we see that he is as near us as we are to ourselves, as well as that he is infinitely more amiable in himself.

Sect. 12. 4. And because of the imparity of the creature and the Creator, he hath provided such means to demonstrate to us his nearness, as are necessary to the exercise of our love. We shall see his glory, and taste his love, in our glorified Mediator, and in the glory of the church and world. God will condescend to show himself to us according to our capacities of beholding him. Here we see him in his works and word, and there we shall see him in the glory of all his perfect works. But this leadeth me to the second object of my love.

Sect. 13. II. Under God, as I shall see, so I shall delightfully

love, the glorious perfection of the universe, even the image of God in all the world; as my love will be my delight, so I shall love best that which is best, and most delight in it: and the whole is better than any part; and there is a peculiar beauty and excellency in the whole world, as perfect, compaginate, harmonious, which is not to be found in any part, no, not in Christ himself, as man, nor in his church.

The marvellous inclination that all things have to union, even the inanimates, might persuade me, if I felt it not certainly in myself, that it is most credible that man also shall have the like inclination, and such as is agreeable to the nature of his faculties; and therefore our love and delight in all things is that uniting inclination in man.

Sect. 14. III. And I shall have a special love to the holy society, the triumphant, universal church, consisting of Christ, angels, and saints, as they are specially amiable in the image and glory of God. God himself loveth them more than his inferior works; that is, his essence, which is love, and hath no degrees or change, doth send forth fuller streams of good upon them, or maketh them better and happier than the rest. And my love will imitate the love of God, in my capacity. And if societies on earth, more holy and wise than others, though imperfectly, are very amiable, what then will the heavenly society be? Of this I spake before (of knowing them).

Sect. 15. 1. Think here, O my soul, how sweet a state unto thee it will be to love the Lord Jesus, thy glorified Head, with perfect love! When the glory of God, which shineth in him, will feast thy love with full and everlasting pleasure, the highest created perfection of power, wisdom, and goodness, refulgent in him, will not give leave to thy love to cease, or intermit, or abate its fervour. When thou shalt see in the glorified church the precious fruits of Christ's redemption, grace, and love, this also will feed thy love to him, from whom this heavenly glory cometh. And when thou shalt feel thyself possessed of perfect happiness, by his love to thee, will not this also do its part? Yea, the remembrance of all his former love, what he did for thee, and what he did in thee here on earth, how he called thee with an holy calling; how he washed thee in his blood from all thy sins; how he kindled in thee those desires which tended to that perfect glory; how he renewed thy nature; how he instructed, and guided, and preserved thee from thy childhood; and how many and how great sins, enemies, dangers, and sufferings, he saved

thee from ; all this will constrain thee everlastingly to love him. Thus, (though he give the kingdom to the Father, as ceasing his mediatory, healing, saving work of acquisition,) he will be to thee the Mediator of fruition. God in him will be accessible, and condescend to a suitable communion with us. (John xvii. 24.) And as Christ is thy life, radically and efficiently, as he is the giver of grace and Spirit of love, so he will be objectively thy life as he is lovely, and it will be formally thy life to love him, and God in him, for ever.

Sect. 16. 2. Think, also, O my soul, how delectable it will be to love (as well as to know) those angels that most fervently love the Lord ! They will be lovely to thee as they have loved thee, and more as they have been lovers and benefactors to the church and to mankind ; but far more as they are so many refulgent stars, which continually move and shine, and burn in purest love to their Creator. O blessed difference between that amiable society of holy spirits, and this dark, mad, distracted, wicked world ! Here devils tempt me within, and devils incarnate persecute me without. Blaspheming of God, reviling godliness, deriding the sacred Scriptures, and sacred exercises, malignant slandering of the servants of God, hating, persecuting, silencing, and saying all manner of evil falsely of them, for their righteousness' sake, while such crimes are pretended, as they once falsely charged on Christ himself. This is the conversation of those that I have long dwelt with in the world : atheism, infidelity, papal church tyranny, bloody wars, destroying the righteous, oppressing the poor, adultery and fornication, stigmatising perjury, ambition, violence, covetousness, deceit, sottish ignorance, wilfulness in sin, hatred of reproof, revengeful malice ; these, and such like, are the fruits of the soil where I have long sojourned (though, through the grace of Christ, among the faithful, there have been better fruits). And is not the company of holy angels better than this ? With whom God is all ; who are even made up of shining wisdom, and holy love, and beneficent activity ; who are the blessed choir that melodiously sing forth the high praises of their Maker. Among whom God dwelleth as in his presence-chamber, or his temple, and in whom he taketh his great delight. With these I shall see or hear no evil. No mixture of fools or wicked ones do pollute or trouble their society. There will be no false doctrine, no evil example, no favouring wickedness, no accusing goodness, no hurtful violence, but holy, powerful, operative love, will be all, and do all,

as their very nature, life, and work. And is it not better to be a door-keeper there, than to dwell in the palaces of wickedness? And is not a day with them better than a thousand here?

Sect. 17. 3. And with the holy angels I shall love holy souls that are made like unto them, and joined with them in the same society; and it is likely with them judge, that is, rule the world. All their infirmities are there put off with the flesh; they also are spirits made up of holy life, and light, and love. There is none of their former ignorance, error, imprudence, selfishness, contentiousness, impatience, or any other troubling, hurtful thing. When I think with what fervent love to God, to Jesus Christ, and to one another, they will be perfectly united there, alas, how sad and how shameful is it, that they should here be prone to disaffections and divisions, and hardly agree to call each other the servants of God, or to worship God in the same assemblies; but the remnants of dividing principles, *viz.*, pride, error, and uncharitableness; will be all left behind. Society with imperfect saints is sweet; the imperfect image of God upon them is amiable; but their frailties here are so vexatious, that it is hard to live with some of them in peace. But perfect love will make them one; and oh, how delightful will that communion of saints be! I can never forget how sweet God hath made the course of my pilgrimage, by the fragrancy and usefulness of his servants' graces; how sweet have my bosom friends been, though mutable! How sweet have the neighbourhood of the godly been! How sweet have the holy assemblies been; and how many hours of comfort have I there had! How profitable have their writings, their conference, and their prayers been! What then will it be, to live in the union of perfect love with perfect saints in heaven for ever, and with them concordantly to love the God of love?

Sect. 18. III. And as the act and the object of love will constitute my felicity, so will my reception from the love of God and his creatures, be sweeter to me than my own activity can be; for it is mutual love that makes it up. I shall not be the fountain of my own delights; nor can I act till I am acted, nor offer any thing to God, but what I have first received from him. And receive I shall abundantly and continually, and from thence shall overflow to God, and receiving and returning are now, and will be, the circular, endless motion, and our true perpetual life and happiness.

Sect. 19. I. All my receivings shall be from God. His love is not a mere immanent will, nor a wish which toucheth not the object; but it is what heat is in, or from, the sun or fire; it is an efflux of goodness: it is the most powerful, sweet, communicating principle, or work. All love is communicative; but none in comparison of God's; as there is none primitively and simply good but God. How much doth love in the affairs of men? All that is pleasant in the world is it, or its effects. Were it not for sensual love, there would be no generation of man or brutes; God hath made it a generating principle. Hatred causeth not congress, but fighting with, or flying from, one another. Were it not for natural love, mothers would never endure the pain, and trouble, and care, which is necessary to human birth and education; were it not for love, parents would never labour all their lives to leave their children well instructed, and well provided for, when they are gone. My food would not please me did I not love it, and I should neglect it to the neglect of my life. Did I not love my books, and learning itself, I should never have bestowed so much of seventy years in poring on them, and searching for knowledge, as I have done; did I not love my house, my conveniences and necessaries, I should neglect them, and they would be to me of small use; did I not love my friends, I should be less profitable to them, and they to me; did I not love my life, I should neglect it, and never have endured the labour and cost about it as I have done. If a man love not his country, posterity, and the common good, he will be as a burdensome drone in the hive, or as pernicious vermin. What is done in the world that is good, but by love?

And if created love be so necessary, so active, so communicative, how much more will the infinite love of the Creator be! His love is now the life of the world; his love is the life of nature in the living, the life of holiness in saints, and the life of glory in the blessed. In this infinite love it is that I, and all the saints, shall dwell for evermore. And if I dwell in love, and love in me, surely I shall have its sweet and plenteous communication, and shall ever drink of the rivers of pleasure. It is pleasant to nature to be beloved of others, especially of the great, and wise, and good; much more to have all the communications of love, in converse and gifts, in plenty and continuance, which may be still expressing it to our greatest benefit! Had I a friend now that did for me but the hundredth part of

what God doth, how dearly should I love him ! Think then, think believingly, seriously, constantly, O my soul, what a life thou shalt live for ever in the presence, the face, the bosom of infinite, eternal love. He now shineth on me by the sun, and on my soul by the Son of righteousness ; but it is as through a lantern, or the crevices of my darksome habitation ; but then he will shine on me, and in me, openly, and with the fullest streams and beams of love.

Sect. 20. God is the same God in heaven and earth, but I shall not be the same man. Here I receive comparatively little, but live in darkness, doubtful and frequent sorrows, because my receptivity is less ; the windows of my soul are not open to his light ; sin hath raised clouds, and consequently storms, against my comforts ; the entrances to my soul by the straits of flesh and sense are narrow ; and they are made narrower by sin than they were by nature. Alas, how often would love have spoken comfortably to me, and I was not at home to be spoken with, but was abroad among a world of vanities, or was not at leisure, or was asleep, and not willing to be awaked ! How oft would love have come in and dwelt with me, and I have unkindly shut my doors against him ; how oft would he have been with me in secret, where he freely would embrace me, but I had some pleasing company or business which I was loth to leave ; how oft would he have feasted me, and had made all ready, but I was taken up and could not come. Nay, when his table hath been spread before me, Christ, grace, and glory, have been offered to me, my appetite hath been gone, or dull, and all hath been almost neglected by me, and hath scarce seemed pleasant enough to be accepted, or to call off my mind from luscious poison. How oft would he have shined upon me, and I have shut my windows or mine eyes ; he was jealous indeed, and liked not a partner ; he would have been all to me, if I would have been all for him. But I divided my heart, my thoughts, my love, my desires, and my kindnesses ; and, alas, how much did go besides him, yea against him, to his enemies, even when I knew that all was lost, and worse than lost, which was not his. What wonder then, if so foolish and unkind a sinner had little pleasure in his love ; and if so great ingratitude and neglect of sovereign goodness were punished with such strangeness, and fears, and faintings, as I have long with groans lamented.

Recipitur ad modum recipientis.

But in heaven I shall have none of these obstructions ; all old

unkindness and ingratitude will be forgiven ; the great Reconciler in whom I am beloved will then have perfected his work ; I shall then be wholly separated from the vanity which here deceived me ; my open soul will be prepared to receive the heavenly influx ; with open face I shall behold the open face of glorifying love ; I shall joyfully attend his voice, and delightfully relish the celestial provisions. No disease will corrupt my appetite ; no sluggishness will make me guilty again of my old neglects ; the love of the Father, by the grace of the Son, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, will have got the victory over all my deadness, folly, and disaffection, and my God-displeasing and self-undoing averseness and enmity will be gone for ever. The perfect love, which God doth first effect in me, will be my everlasting receptivity of the fullest love of God. Benevolent love will make me good ; that is, a holy lover of God ; and then pleased love will make me his delight, and benevolence will still maintain me in my capacity.

Study this heavenly work of love, O my soul ; these are not dead or barren studies, these are not sad, unpleasant studies, it is only love that can relish love and understand it ; the will here hath its gust, so like to an understanding, as make some philosophers say, that *voluntas percipit* is a proper phrase. What can poor, carnal worldlings know of glorious love, who study it without love ? What sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, a lifeless voice, are they that preach of God, and Christ, and heavenly glory, without love ; but gazing upon the face of love in Christ, and tasting of its gifts, and looking up to its glorious reign, is the way to kindle the sacred fire in thee. Look upwards, if thou wouldest see the light that must lead thee upwards. It is not for nothing that Christ hath taught us to begin our prayers with " Our Father, which art in heaven ; " it is fatherly love that must win our hearts, and that must comfort them ; and it is in heaven where this is gloriously manifested. As I said before, as the soul is in all the body, but yet understandeth not in the hand as it doth in the head, and rejoiceth not in the foot as it doth in the heart ; so God, that is everywhere, doth not everywhere glorify his love as he doth it in heaven. Thither, therefore, the mind and eye are even by nature taught to look up as to God, as we look a man in the face when we speak to him, rather than to his feet, though his soul be also there.

My sinful heart hath needed sorrow. My careless, rash, pre-

sumptuous soul hath needed fears; and I have had some part of these. Mercy saw it good for me, as necessary to prevent my dangerous deceits and lapses: and O that in the hour of sensual temptations I had feared more, and departed from evil. But it is holy love that must be my life; or else I am dead notwithstanding fear.

Oh, come, then, and study the life of love. It is more of a holy nature than of art; but yet study must do much to prepare thee to receive it. This is the great use of a heavenly conversation. It is the contemplation, belief, and hope of the glorious state of love hereafter, that must make us like it, and kindle it in us here. The burning glass must be turned directly to the sun, if you will have it set any thing on fire. There is a carnal or common love to God, which is kindled in men by carnal pleasures; but a holy love, like that in heaven, must be studiously fetched from heaven, and kindled by the foresight of what is there, and what we shall be there for ever. Faith must ascend, and look within the veil. Thou must not live as a stranger to thy home, to thy God, and Saviour, and thy hopes. The fire that must warm thee is in heaven, and thou must come near it, or open thyself to its influence, if thou wilt feel its powerful efficacy. It is night and winter with carnal minds, when it is day and summer with those that set their faces heavenward.

Sect. 21. II. But, though all my receivings will be from God, they will not be from him alone. We must live in perfect union also with one another, and with all the heavenly society; and therefore as we must love them all, so shall we be beloved by them all: and this will be a subordinate part of our blessedness. God there will make use of second causes, even in communicating his love and glory.

Sect. 22. 1. The Lord Jesus Christ will not only be the object of our delightful love, but will also love us with an effectual, operative love for ever. His love will be as the vital heat and motion of the heart to all the members, the root of our life and joy. The love of our Redeemer will flow out into us all as the vital spirits, and his face of glory will be the sun of the heavenly Jerusalem, and will shine upon us, and show us God; and in his light we shall have light. Did his tears for a dead Lazarus make men say, 'Behold how he loved him!' O, then, what will the reviving beams of heavenly life make us say of that love which filleth us with the pleasures of his presence, and

turneth our souls into joy itself. He comforteth us now by the teaching of his word; but, surely, the fruition of salvation will be more gladdening than the tidings of it. When he that told us of glory, in his gospel, shall give it us, we shall not only believe, but feel that he loveth us.

Sect. 23. Believe, O my soul, thy Saviour's love, that thou mayest foretaste it, and be fit to feel it. We were incapable, in sinful flesh, of seeing him otherwise than as clothed with flesh, and his consolations were administered by a word of promise suitable to his appearance; but when he withdrew his bodily presence, the Comforter was sent with a fuller consolation. But all that was but the earnest, and the first-fruits, of what he will be to us for ever. Be not seldom, nor unbelieving, nor slight, in the thoughts of thy Saviour's love, for it is he that is the way to the infinite love. Let thy believing be so much of thy daily work, that thou mayest say that he "dwelleth in thy heart by faith;" (Eph. iii. 17;) and that while thou livest here it is Christ that liveth in thee; and that thy life in the flesh is not a fleshly life, but by the faith of the Son of God that hath loved thee, and given himself for thee. (Gal. ii. 20.) And that though thou see him not, yet, believing, thou lovest him also with unspeakable joy, as believing the unspeakable perfect joy which his love will communicate to thee for ever.

Look upon the sun, and think thus with thyself: 'How wonderful is the emanation of this sun: its motion, light, and heat, communicated to so many millions of creatures all over the earth, and in the seas. What, if all these beams of light and heat were proportionable beams of perfect knowledge, love, and joy; and that all creatures that are under the sun had, from its influx, as much wisdom, love, and joy, as they have light, heat, and motion. Would not then this earth be as a world of angels, and a heaven? O what a blessed world would it be; and what a benefactor would the sun be to the world! Why, even such will Jesus Christ be to the celestial world. He is the sun of glory. His influence will send forth life and light, and joyful love upon all the blessed, from the face of God, as the sun sends forth from God its motion, light, and heat, upon this world. Now, therefore, begin, and live upon him: live upon the influence of his grace, his teaching, love-kindling, and quickening grace, that thou mayest have his name and mark, and he may find in thee something of himself, or of his own, when thou comest to his righteous trial. His grace is not in my

power, nor at my command. It is not meet it should be so; but he hath not bid me seek and beg in vain. If he had never told me that he will give it me, it is equal to a promise if he do but bid me seek and ask. But I have more. He teacheth me to pray: he maketh my prayers: he writeth me out a prayer-book on my heart: he giveth me desires, and he loveth to be importuned by them: his Spirit is first a spirit of supplication, and after of consolation, and in both a spirit of adoption. So far is he from being loth to be troubled with my importunity, that he seeketh me to seek his grace, and is displeased with me that I will ask and have no more.

All this is true: but how then cometh my soul to be yet so low, so dark, so fond of this wretched flesh and world, and so backward to go home, and dwell with Christ? Alas! a taste of heaven on earth is a mercy too precious to be cast away upon such as have long grieved and quenched the Spirit, and are not, by diligent and patient seeking, prepared to receive it. He that proclaimeth a general peace, will give peace only to the sons of peace. If, after such unkind neglects, such wilful sins as I have been guilty of, I should expect to be suddenly in my Saviour's arms, and to be feasted presently with the first-fruits of heaven, I should look that the Most Holy should too little manifest his hatred of my sin. My conscience remembereth the follies of my youth, and many a later odious sin; and telleth me that if heaven were quite hid from my sight, and I should never have a glimpse of the face of glorious, eternal love, it were but just. I look upward from day to day; I groan to see his pleased face, and better to know my God and my home. I cry to him daily, 'My God, this little is better than all the pleasures of sin. My hopes are better than all the possessions of this world. Thy gracious looks have oft revived me, and thy mercies have been immeasurable to my soul and body. But, oh, how far short am I of what, even fifty years ago, I hoped sooner to have attained! Where is the peace that passeth understanding, that should keep my heart and mind in Christ? Oh! where is the seeing, the longing, the rejoicing, and triumphing faith? Where is that pleasant familiarity above, that should make a thought of Christ and heaven to be sweeter to me than the thoughts of friends, or health, or all the prosperity and pleasure of this world? Do those that dwell in God, and God in them, and have their hearts and conversations in heaven, attain to no more clear and satisfying perceptions of that blessed state than

I have yet attained? Is there no more acquaintance above to be here expected; no livelier sense of future joys, nor sweeter foretaste; no fuller silencing of doubts and fears? I am not so loth to go to a friend, nor to the bed where I oft spend the night in restless pains and rolling, as I have too often been to come to thee. Alas! how many of thy servants are less afraid to go to a prison than to their God, and had rather be banished to a land of strangers than sent to heaven. Lord, must I, that am called thy child, and an heir of heaven, and a co-heir with Christ, have no more acquaintance with my glorified Lord, and no more love to thee that art my portion, before I go hence, and come before thee? Shall I have no more of the heavenly life, and light, and love? Alas! I have scarce enough in my meditations to denominate them truly heavenly meditations. I have scarce enough in a prayer to make it indeed a heavenly prayer, or in a sermon to make it a heavenly sermon: and shall I have no more when I come to die? Must I go hence so like a stranger to my home? Wilt thou take strangers into heaven, and know them as thine that do not better know thee here? O my God, vouchsafe a sinner yet more of his Spirit that came down on earth to call up earthly minds to God, and to open heaven to all believers! O what do I beg for so frequently, so earnestly, for the sake of my Redeemer, as the spirit of life and consolation, which may show me the pleased face of God, and unite all my affections to my glorified Head, and draw up this dark and drowsy soul to love and long to be with thee?’

But, alas! though these are my daily groans, how little yet do I ascend. I dare not blame the God of love; he is full and willing. I dare not blame my blessed Saviour; he hath showed that he is not backward to do good. I dare not accuse the Holy Spirit; it is his work to sanctify and comfort souls. If I knew no reason of this, my low and dark estate, I must needs conclude that it is somewhat in myself. But, alas! my conscience wants not matter to satisfy me of the cause. Sinful resistance of the Spirit, and unthankful neglects of grace and glory, are undoubtedly the cause. But are they not a cause that mercy can forgive, that grace can overcome? And may I not yet hope for such a victory before I die?

Lord, I will lie at thy doors and groan: I will pour out my moans before thee. I will beg, and whatever thou wilt, do thou with me. Thou describest the kindness of the dogs to a Lazarus that lay at a rich man's door in sores: thou commend-

est the neighbourly pity of a Samaritan, that took care of a wounded man: thou condemnest those that wilt not show mercy to the poor and needy: thou biddest us be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful. If we see our brother have need, and shut up the bowels of our compassion from him, it is because thy love dwelleth not in us: and shall I wait, then, at thy doors in vain, and go empty away from such a God; when I beg but for that which thou hast commanded me to ask, and without which I cannot serve thee, or come to thee, live or die in a habit beseeeming a member of Christ, a child of God, and an heir of heaven? O give me the wedding garment, without which I shall but dishonour thy bounteous feast. Let me wear a livery which becometh thy family, even a child of God. How oft hast thou commanded me to rejoice; yea, to rejoice with exceeding and unspeakable joy; and how fain would I in this obey thee. O that I had more faithfully obeyed thee in other preparatory duties, in ruling my senses, my fancy, my tongue, and in diligent using all thy talents! Then I might more easily have obeyed thee in this. Thou knowest, Lord, that love and joy are duties that must have more than a command. O bid me do them with an effecting word. How can I rejoice in death and darkness? When the bridegroom is absent I must fast and mourn. While I look towards heaven but through the crevices of this dungeon flesh, my love and joy will be but answerable to my light. How long is it since I hoped that I had been translated from the kingdom of darkness, and delivered from the power of the Prince of Darkness, and brought into that light which is the entrance of the inheritance of saints. And yet, alas! darkness, darkness is still my misery. There is light round about me, in thy word and works, but darkness is within me: and if my eye be dark, the sun will be no sun to me. Alas! my Lord, it is not all the learning in the world; no, not of theology, that consisteth in the knowledge of words and methods, which I can take for the satisfactory, heavenly light. To know what thou hast written in the sacred book, is not enough to make me know my glorified Saviour, my Father, and my home. It must be a light from heaven that must show me heaven, and a light accompanied with vital heat that must turn to love and joy within me. O let me not have only dreaming knowledge of words and signs, but quickening light, to show the things which these words do signify, to my mind and heart. Surely, the faith by which we must live, must be a living faith, and

must reach further than to words, how true soever. Can faith live in the dark? What is it but an effect of thine illumination? What is my unbelief but the darkness of my soul? Lord Jesus, scatter all these mists! Make thy way, O thou Sun of Righteousness, into this benighted mind! O send thine advocate to silence every temptation that is against thy truth and thee; and thine agent to prosecute thy cause against thine enemies and mine, and to be the resident witness of thy verity, and my sonship and salvation. Hearing of thee is not satisfactory to me: it must be the presence and operation of thy light and love, shed abroad by thy Spirit on my heart, that must quiet and content my soul. I confess, with shame, that I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am unworthy to have any glimpse or taste of heaven; but so did many that are now entertained and feasted by thy love in glory.

My Lord, I know that heaven is not far from me: it is not, I believe, one day's or hour's journey to a separated soul. How quick is the communion of my eyes with the sun, that seems far off; and couldst thou not show it me in a moment? Is not faith a seeing grace? It can see the invisible God, the unseen world, the new Jerusalem, the innumerable angels, and the Spirits of the perfected just, if it be animated by thine influx; without which it can do nothing, and is nothing. Thou that oft healedst the blind here in the flesh, didst tell us that it is much more thy work to illuminate souls. It is but forgiving all my sins, and removing this film that sin hath gathered, and my illuminated soul will see thy glory. I know that the veil of flesh must be also rent before I shall see thee with open face, and know my fellow-citizens above as I am known. It is not heaven on earth that I am begging for, but that I may see it from Mount Nebo, and have the bunch of grapes, the pledge and the first-fruits: that faith and hope which may kindle love and desire, and make me run my race in patience, and live and die in the joy which beseemeth an heir of heaven.

But if my part on earth must be no greater than yet it is, let it make me the wearier of this dungeon, and groan more fervently to be with thee, and long for the day when all my longing shall be satisfied, and my soul be filled with thy light and love.

Sect. 24. And, doubtless, as I shall love the angels and saints in heaven, so I shall some way, in subordination to Christ, be a receiver from them. Our love will be mutual; and which

way soever I owe duty, I shall expect some answerable return of benefit. The sun shineth upon the stars, as well as upon the earth, and stars on one another. If angels are greatly useful to me here, it is like they will be much more there, where I shall be a more capable receiver. It will be no diminution to Christ's honour, that he there maketh use of my fellow-creatures to my joy, no more than it is here. The whole creation will still be one compaginated frame; and the heavenly society will for ever retain their relation to each other, and their aptitude and disposition to the duties and benefits of those relations. And as we shall be far fitter for them than here we are, so shall we have far more comfort in them. How gloriously will God shine in the glory of the blessed! How delightful will it be to see their perfection, in wisdom, holiness, love, and concord! What voices they use, or what communication, instead of voices, we shall shortly know; but surely there is a blessed harmony of minds, and wills, and practice. All are not equal; but all accord to love and praise their glorious God, and readily to obey him, and perfectly to love each other. There is no jarring, or discordant spirit that is out of tune; no separation or opposition to each other. As God's love in Christ is our full and final happiness, so nature, which hath made us sociable, teacheth us to desire to be loved of each other, but especially by wise and worthy persons. Saints and angels in heaven will love incomparably better than our dearest friends on earth can do, and better than they did themselves when we were on earth; for they will love that best which is best, and where there is most of God appearing; else it were not intellectual love. And therefore they will love us as much better when we come to heaven, as we shall be better. If we go from loving friends on earth, we shall go to them that love us far more. The love of those here doth but pity us in our pains, and go weeping with our carcasses to the grave; but the love of those above will joyfully convoy, or welcome, our souls to their triumphant society. All the holy friends that we thought we had lost, that went before us, we shall find rejoicing there with Christ.

And oh, what a glorious state will be that common uniting, and united love! If two or three candles joined together make a greater flame and light, what would ten thousand stars united do? When all the love of angels and saints in full perfection shall be so united, as to make one love, to God that is one, and

to one another, who are there all one in Christ; O what a glorious love will that be! That love and joy will be the same thing; and that one universal love will be one universal joy.

Little know we how great a mercy it is to be here commanded to love our neighbours as ourselves; and much more, to be effectually taught of God so to love one another. And did we all here live in such unfeigned love, we should be like to heaven, as bearing the image of the God of Love; but, alas! our societies here are small; our goodness, which is our amiableness, wofully imperfect and mixed with loathsome sin and discord; but there, a whole heaven full of blessed spirits will flame for ever, in perfect love to God, to Christ, and one another.

Go then, go willingly, O my soul! Love joineth with light, to draw up thy desires! Nature inclineth all things unto union: even the lifeless elements have an aggregative motion, by which the parts, when violently separated, do hastily return to their natural adhesion. Art thou a lover of wisdom, and wouldest thou not be united to the wise? Art thou a lover of holiness, and wouldest thou not be united to the holy, who are made of love? Art thou a hater of enmity, discord, and divisions, and a lover of unity here on earth, and wouldest thou not be where all the just are one? It is not an unnatural union to thy loss; nothing shall be taken from thee by it: thou shalt receive by it more than thou canst contribute; it shall not be forced against thy will; it is but a union of minds and wills; a perfect union of loves. Let not natural or sinful selfishness cause thee to think suspiciously or hardly of it, for it is thy happiness and end. What got the angels that fell to selfishness, from unity? and what got Adam, that followed them herein? The further any man goeth from unity, by selfishness, the deeper he falleth into sin and misery from God. And what doth grace but call us back from sin and selfishness, to God's unity again? Doat not, then, on this dark, divided world. Is not thy body, while the parts by an uniting soul are kept together, and make one, in a better state, than when it is crumbled into lifeless dust? And doth not death creep on thee by a gradual dissolution? Away, then, from this sandy, incoherent state; the further from the centre, the further from unity. A unity indeed there is of all things; but it is one heavenly life and light and love, which is the true felicitating union.

We dispute here whether the aggregative motion of separated parts (as in *descensu gravium*,) be from a motive principle

in the part, or by the attraction of the whole, or by any external impulse. It is like that there is somewhat of all these; but sure the greatest cause is like to do most to the effect. The body of the earth hath more power to attract a clod, or stone, than the intrinsic principle to move it downwards; but intrinsic gravity is also necessary. The superior attractive love and loveliness must do more to draw up this mind to God, than my intrinsic holiness to move it upward; but without this holiness, the soul would not be capable of feeling that attractive influx. Every grace cometh from God, to fit and lead up my soul to God. Faith, therefore, believeth the heavenly state, and love doth, with some delight, desire it, and hope gapeth after it, that I may at last attain it.

They that have pleaded against propriety, and would have all things common in this world, have forgotten that there is a propriety in our present egoity, and natural constitution, which rendereth some accidental propriety necessary to us. Every man hath his own bodily parts, and inherent accidents; and every man must have his own food, his own place, clothing, and acquisitions; his own children, and, therefore, his own wife, &c. But that the greatest perfection is most for community, as far as nature is capable of it, God would show us, in making the first receivers of the extraordinary pourings-out of his Spirit, to sell all, and voluntarily make all common, none saying, This or that is my own; which was not done by any constraining law but by the law or power of uniting love: they were first all as of one heart and soul. (Acts iv. 32.)

Take not, then, thy inordinate desire of propriety for thy health, but for thy sickness; cherish it not, and be not afraid to lose it, and measure not the heavenly felicity by it: spirits are penetrable; they claim not so much as a propriety of place, as bodies do. It is thy weakness and state of imperfection now which maketh it so desirable to thee that thy house should be thine, and no one's but thine; thy land be thine, and no one's but thine; thy clothes, thy books, yea, thy knowledge and grace, be thine, and no one's but thine. How much more excellent a state were it, (if we were here capable of it,) if we could say, that all these are as the common light of the sun, which is mine, and every one's as well as mine! Why are we so desirous to speak all languages, but that we might understand all men, and be understood of all, and so might make our sentiments as common as is possible? Whence is it that men are

so addicted to talkativeness; but that nature would make all our thoughts and passions as common as it can? And why else are learned men so desirous to propagate their learning, and godly men so desirous to make all others wise and godly? It seemeth one of the greatest calamities of this life, that when a man hath, with the longest and hardest study, attained to much knowledge, he cannot bequeath it, or any part of it, to his heir, or any person when he dieth, but every man must acquire it for himself; and when God hath sanctified the parents, they cannot communicate their holiness to their children (though God promise to bless them on their account). Much less can any man make his grace or knowledge common: nature and grace incline us to desire it; but we cannot do it. For this end we talk, and preach, and write; for this end we study to be as plain, and convincing, and moving as we can, that we may make our knowledge and affections as common to our hearers and readers as we can. And oh, what a blessed work should we take preaching and writing for, if we could make them all know, but what we know, and love what we are persuading them to love! There would then be no need of schools and universities: a few hours would do more than they do in an age. But, alas! how rare is it for a father of excellent learning and piety, to have one son like himself, after all his industry!

Is not the heavenly communion, then, desirable, where every man shall have his own, and yet his own be common to all others? My knowledge shall be my own, and other men's as well as mine; my goodness shall be my own and theirs; my glory and felicity shall be mine and theirs; and theirs also shall be mine as well as theirs. The knowledge, the goodness, the glory, of all the heavenly society, shall be mine, according to my capacity; grace is the seed of such a state, which maketh us all one in Christ, (neither Barbarian nor Scythian, circumcision nor uncircumcision, bond nor free,) by giving us to love our neighbours as ourselves, and to love both our neighbours and ourselves for Christ, and Christ in all: well might Paul say, all things are yours. But it is here but as in the seed; the perfect union and communion is hereafter. Earth and heaven must be distinguished; we must not extend our hopes or pretensions here beyond the capacity of our natures. As perfect holiness and knowledge, so perfect unity and concord, is proper to heaven, and is not here to be expected. The papal pretensions of an impossible union in one governor of all the earth, is the

means to hinder that union which is possible. But the state of perfection is the state of perfect union and communion. Hasten then upwards, O my soul, with the ferventest desires, and breathe after that state with the strongest hopes; where thou shalt not be rich, and see thy neighbours poor about thee, nor be poor, while they are rich; nor be well while they are sick, or sick while they are well; but their riches, their health, their joy, will be all thine, and thine will be all theirs, as the common light; and none will have the less for the participation of the rest; yea, communion will be part of every one's felicity; it constituteth the very being of the city of God. This celestial communion of saints in one holy church, above what is here to be attained, is now an article of our belief; but believing will soon end in seeing and enjoying.

V. *The constitutive reasons from the heavenly life or practice.*

Sect. 1. Seeing and loving will be the heavenly life; but yet it seemeth that, besides these, there will be executive powers, and, therefore, some answerable practice. There are good works in heaven, and far more and better than on earth. For, 1. there will be more vital activity, and, therefore, more exercise for it; for the power is for action. 2. There will be more love to God and one another; and love is active. 3. There will be more likeness to God and our Redeemer, who is communicative, and doth good, as he is good. 4. Our union with Christ, who will be everlastingly beneficent, as well as benevolent, will make us in our places also beneficent. 5. Our communion in the city of God will prove that we shall all bear our part, as the members of the body, in contributing to the welfare of the whole, and in the common returns to God.

Sect. 2. But what are the heavenly works we must perfectly know when we come thither? In general we know; 1. That they will be the works of love to God and to his creatures; that is, such as love inclineth us to exercise. 2. And they will be works of obedience to God; that is, such as we shall do to please his will, and because he willeth them to be our duty. 3. They will be useful works to others. 4. They will be pleasant to ourselves, and part of our felicity. 5. And they will carry all to God, our end.

Sect. 3. And somewhat of them is particularly described in the Holy Scriptures: as, 1. We shall in concord with the holy

society, or choir, give thanks and praise to God and our Redeemer. (Rev. xix. 5; 1 Pet. iv. 11; Rev. vii. 4, and iv. 7, 11, and v. 13, and vii. 12, and xix. 1; Phil. iv. 20.) Whether there be any voice, or only such spiritual activity and exultation as to man, in flesh, is not to be clearly understood, is not fit for us here to presume to determine: it will be somewhat more high and excellent than our vocal praise and singing is; and of which this beareth some analogical resemblance or signification. As all passions earnestly desire vent and exercise, so specially do our holy affections of love, joy, and admiration of God Almighty. And there is in us a desire of communion with many in such affections and expressions: methinks when we are singing or speaking God's praise in the great assemblies, with joyful and fervent souls, I have the liveliest foretaste of heaven on earth: and I could almost wish that our voices were loud enough to reach through all the world, and unto heaven itself: nor could I ever be offended (as many are) at the organs, and other convenient music, soberly and seasonably used, which excite and help to tune my soul in so holy a work, in which no true assistance is to be despised. No work more comforteth me in my greatest sufferings, none seemeth more congruous and pleasant to me while I wait for death, than psalms, and words of praise to God; nor is there any exercise in which I had rather end my life: and should I not then willingly go to the heavenly choir, where God is praised with perfect love, and joy, and harmony? Had I more of a praising frame of soul, it would make me long more for that life of praise. For I never find myself more willing to be there than when I most joyfully speak or sing God's praise. Though the dead praise not God in the grave, and dust doth not give him thanks; yet living souls in heaven do it joyfully, while their fleshly clothing turns to dust.

Lord, tune my soul to thy praises now, that sweet experience may make me long to be where I shall do it better! I see where any excellent music is, nature maketh men flock to it; and they that are but hearers, yet join by a concurrent fancy and delight: surely, if I had once heard the heavenly choir, I should echo to their holy songs, though I could not imitate them; and I should think it the truest blessedness to be there, and bear my part. My God, the voice of thy comforting Spirit, speaking thy love effectually to my soul, would make such holy music in me, that would incline me to the celestial con-

sort ; and without it all these thoughts and words will be in vain. It is the inward melody of thy Spirit and my conscience, that must tune me to desire the heavenly melody. O speak thy love first to my heart, and then I shall joyfully speak it to my brethren, and shall ambitiously seek that communion of them that praise thee better than sinful, groaning mortals can : and though my sins here make a loathed jar and discord in my songs, I hope my groans for those sins, and their effects, will make no discord : sighs and tears have had the honour to be accepted by thee, who despisest not a contrite soul : but if thy Spirit will sing and speak within me, and help me against the discordant murmurs of my unbelieving heart, and pained flesh, I shall offer thee that which is more suitable to thy love and grace. I confess, Lord, that daily tears and sighs are not unsuitable to the eyes and voice of so great a sinner, who is under thy correcting rod ! What better could I expect when I grieved thy Spirit, than that it should prove my grief ? Yea, this is far better than the genuine effects of sin. But this is not it that is meetest to be offered to the God of love : he that offereth praise doth glorify thee : and is not this the spiritual sacrifice acceptable through Christ, for which we were made priests to God. (1 Pet. ii. 5.) I refuse not, Lord, to lie in tears and groans when thou requirest it ; and do not thou refuse those tears and groans ; but O give me better, that I may have better of thine own to offer thee : and by this prepare me for the far better, which I shall find with Christ : and that which is best to us thy creatures will be accepted as best by thee, who art glorified and pleased in the perfection of thy works.

Sect. 4. II. It is, at least, very probable that God maketh glorified spirits his agents and ministers of much of his beneficence to the creatures that are below them. For, 1. We see that where he endueth any creature with the noblest endowments, he maketh most use of that creature to the benefit of others : we shall in heaven be most furnished to do good ; and that furniture will not be unused. 2. And Christ tells us that we shall be like, or equal to, the angels ; which though it mean not simply and in all things, yet it meaneth more than to be above carnal generation ; for it speaketh of a similitude of nature and state as the reason of the other. And that the angels are God's ministers for the good of his chosen in this world, and administrators of much of the affairs on earth, is past all doubt. 3. The Apostle telleth us that the saints shall judge the world

and angels: and judging in Scripture is oft put for ruling. It is therefore probable, at least, that the devils, and the damned, shall be put under the saints, and that, with the angels, they shall be employed in some ministerial oversight of the inhabitants and affairs of the promised new earth. 4. And when even the more noble superior bodies, even the stars, are of so great use and influx to inferior bodies, it is like that accordingly superior spirits will be of use to the inhabitants of the world below them.

Sect. 5. But I think it not meet to venture here upon uncertain conjectures beyond the revelation of God's word, and therefore shall add no more, but conclude that God knoweth what use to make of us hereafter as well as here, and that if there were no more for us to do in heaven, but with perfect knowledge, love, and joy, to hold communion with God and all the heavenly society, it were enough to attract a sensible and considerate soul to fervent desires to be at home with God.

Sect. 6. And here I must not over-pass my rejection of the injurious opinion of too many philosophers and divines, who exclude all sense and affection from heaven, and acknowledge nothing there but intellect and will: and this is because they find sense and affection in the brutes; and they think that the souls of brutes are but some quality, or perishing temperament, of matter; and, therefore, that sense and affection is in us no better.

Sect. 7. But, 1. What felicity can we conceive of without any affection of delight or joy: certainly bare volition now without these doth seem to be no felicity to us; nor knowledge neither, if there were no delight in knowing.

Sect. 8. 2. Yea, I leave it to men's experience to judge, whether there be now any such thing in us as proper willing, which is not also some internal sense of, and affection to, the good which we will: if it be complacency or the pleasedness of the will, this signifies some pleasure; and love, in the first act, is nothing else but such an appetite: if it be desire, it hath in it a pleasedness in the thing desired, as in *esse cognito*, as it is thought on by us; and what is love without all sense and affection?

Sect. 9. 3. Why doth the Scripture ascribe love and joy to God and angels if there were not some reason for it? Doubtless there is great difference between the heavenly love and joy, and ours here in the body: and so there is also between their

knowledge and ours, and their will and ours : but it is not that theirs is less or lower than ours, but somewhat more excellent, which ours giveth us some analogical, or imperfect, formal notion of.

Sect. 10. 4. And what though brutes have sense and affection, doth it therefore follow that we have none now ? or that we shall have none hereafter ? Brutes have life : and must we therefore have no life hereafter, because it is a thing that is common to brutes ? Rather, as now we have all that the brutes have, and more, so shall we then have life, and sense, and affection of a nobler sort than brutes, and more. Is not God the living God ? Shall we say that he liveth not because brutes live ? or rather, that they live a sensitive life, and man a sensitive and intellectual, because God is essential, transcendent, infinite life, that makes them live.

Sect. 11. 5. But if they say that there is no sensation or affection but by bodily organs, I answered before to that : the body feeleth nothing at all, but the soul in the body : the soul uniteth itself most nearly to the igneous aërial parts, called the spirits ; and in them it feeleth, seeth, tasteth, smelleth, &c. And that soul that feeleth and seeth, doth also inwardly love, desire, and rejoice : and that soul which doth this in the body, hath the same power and faculty out of the body : and if they judge by the cessation of sensation, when the organs are undisposed, or dead, so they might as well conclude against our future intellection and will, whose operation in an apoplexy we no more perceive than that of sense. But I have before showed that the soul will not want exercise for its essential faculties, for want of objects, or bodily organs ; and that men conclude basely of the souls of brutes, as if they were not an enduring substance, without any proof or probability : and tell us idle dreams, that they are but vanishing temperaments, &c., which are founded on another dream, that fire (or the motive, illuminative, calefactive cause) is no substance neither ; and so our unnatural somatists know none of the most excellent substances, which actuate all the rest, but only the more base and gross, which are actuated by them : and they think they have well acquitted themselves, by telling us of subtle, active matter and motion, without understanding what any living, active, motive, faculty, or virtue is. And because no man knoweth what God doth with the souls of brutes, (whether they are only one common sensitive soul of a more common body, or whether indivi-

duate still, and transmigrant from body to body, or what else :) therefore they make ignorance a plea for error, and feign them to be no substances, or to be annihilated.

Sect. 12. I doubt not but sensation (as is aforesaid) is an excellent operation of the essential faculties of real substances, called spirits; and that the highest and noblest creatures have it in the highest excellency: and though God, that fitteth every thing to its use, hath given, *e. g.* a dog more perfect sense of smelling than a man, yet man's internal sense is far more excellent than the brutes, and thereby is an advantage to our intellection, volition, and joy here in the flesh: and that in heaven we shall have not less, but more, even more excellent sense and affections of love and joy, as well as more excellent intellection and volition; but such as we cannot now clearly conceive of.

Sect. 13. Therefore there is great reason for all those analogical collections which I have mentioned in my book called 'The Saint's Rest' from the present operations and pleasures of the soul in flesh, to help our conceptions of its future pleasures: and though we cannot conclude that they will not inconceivably differ in their manner from what we now feel, I doubt not but feel and rejoice we shall, as certainly as live, and that the soul is essential life, and that our life, and feeling, and joy, will be inconceivably better.

The concluding application.

Sect. 1. I am convinced that it is far better to depart and be with Christ, than to be here: but there is much more than such conviction necessary to bring up my soul to such desires. Still there resisteth, I. The natural averseness to death, which God hath put into every animal, and which is become inordinate and too strong by sin. II. The remnants of unbelief, taking advantage of our darkness here in the flesh, and our too much familiarity with this visible world. III. The want of more lively foretastes in a heavenly mind and love, through weakness of grace, and the fear of guilt. These stand up against all that is said; and words will not overcome them: what then must be done? Is there no remedy?

Sect. 2. There is a special sort of the teaching of God, by which we must learn "so to number our days as to apply our hearts to wisdom;" without which we shall never, effectually, practically, and savingly, learn either this or any the most common, obvious, and easy lesson. When we have read and

heard, and spoken, and written, the soundest truth and certainest arguments, we know yet as if we knew not, and believe as if we believed not, with a slight and dreaming kind of apprehension, till God, by a special illumination, bring the same things clearly to our minds, and awaken the soul by a special suscitation, to feel what we know, and suit the soul to the truth revealed by an influx of his love, which giveth us a pleasing sense of the amiableness and congruity of the things proposed. Since we separated ourselves from God, there is a hedge of separation between our senses and our understandings, and between our understandings and our wills and affections, so that the communion between them is violated, and we are divided in ourselves by this schism in our faculties. All men still see the demonstrations of divine perfections in the world, and every part thereof; and yet how little is God known. All men may easily know that there is a God, who is almighty, omniscient, goodness itself, eternal, omnipresent, the Maker, Preserver, and Governor of all, who should have our whole trust, and love, and obedience; and yet how little of this knowledge is to be perceived in men's hearts to themselves, or in their lives to others. All men know that the world is vanity, that men must die, that riches then profit not, that time is precious, and that we have only this little time to prepare for that which we must receive hereafter; and yet how little do men seem to know, indeed, of all such things as no man doubts of. And when God doth come in with his powerful awakening light and love, then all these things have another appearance of affecting reality than they had before; as if but now we began to know them; words, doctrines, persons, things, do seem as newly known to us.

All my best reasons for our immortality and future life are but as the new-formed body of Adam, before God breathed into him the breath of life. It is he that must make them living reasons. To the Father of Lights, therefore, I must still look up, and for his light and love I must still wait, as for his blessing on the food which I have eaten, which must concoct it into my living substance. Arguments will be but undigested food, till God's effectual influx do digest them. I must learn both as a student and a beggar; when I have thought, and thought a thousand times, I must beg thy blessing, Lord, upon my thoughts, or they will all be but dulness, or self-distraction. If there be no motion, light, and life here, without the influx of

the sun, what can souls do, or receive, or feel, without thy influx. This world will be to us, without thy grace, as a grave or dungeon, where we shall lie in death and darkness. The eye of my understanding, and all its thoughts, will be useless or vexatious to me, without thine illuminating beams. O shine the soul of thy servant into a clearer knowledge of thyself and kingdom, and love him into more divine and heavenly love, and then he will willingly come to thee.

Sect. 3. I. And why should I strive, by the fears of death, against the common course of nature, and against my only hopes of happiness? Is it not appointed for all men once to die? Would I have God to alter this determinate course, and make sinful man immortal upon earth? When we are sinless, we shall be immortal. The love of life was given to teach me to preserve it carefully, and use it well, and not to torment me with the continual, troubling foresight of death. Shall I make myself more miserable than the vegetatives and brutes? Neither they nor I do grieve that my flowers must fade and die, and that my sweet and pleasant fruits must fall, and the trees be unclothed of their beauteous leaves, until the spring. Birds, and beasts, and fishes, and worms, have all a self-preserving fear of death, which urgeth them to fly from danger; but few, if any of them, have a tormenting fear arising from the forethoughts that they must die. To the body, death is less troublesome than sleep; for in sleep I may have disquieting pains or dreams; and yet I fear not going to my bed. But of this before.

If it be the misery after death that is feared, oh! what have I now to do, but to receive the free, reconciling grace that is offered me from heaven, to save me from such misery, and to devote myself totally to him who hath promised that those that come to him he will in nowise cast out.

Sect. 4. But this cometh by my selfishness. Had I studied my duty, and then remembered that I am not mine own, and that it is God's part, and not mine, to determine of the duration of my life, I had been quiet from these fruitless fears. But when I fell to myself, from God, I am fallen to care for myself, as if it were my work to measure out my days; and now I trust not God as I should do with his own. And had my resignation and devotedness to him been more absolute, my trust in him would have been more easy. But, Lord, thou knowest that I would fain be thine, and wholly thine; and it

is to thee that I desire to live; therefore let me quietly die to thee, and wholly trust thee with my soul.

Sect. 5. II. And why should my want of formal conceptions of the future state of separated souls, and my strangeness to the manner of their subsistence and operations, induce me to doubt of those generals, which are evident, and beyond all rational doubting? That souls are substances and not annihilated, and essentially the same, when they forsake the body, as before, I doubt not. Otherwise neither the Christian's resurrection, nor the Pythagorean's transmigration, were a possible thing. For if the soul cease to be, it cannot pass into another body, nor can it re-enter into this. If God raise this body, then it must be by another soul. For the same soul to be annihilated, and yet to begin again to be, is a contradiction; for the second beginning would be by creation, which maketh a new soul, and not the same that was before. It is the invisible things that are excellent, active, operative, and permanent. The visible (excepting light, which maketh all things else visible) are of themselves but lifeless dross. It is the unseen part of plants and flowers which causeth all their growth and beauty, their fruit and sweetness. Passive matter is but moved up and down by the invisible active powers, as chess-men are moved from place to place by the gamester's hands. What a loathsome corpse were the world, without the invisible spirits and natures that animate, actuate, or move it. To doubt of the being or continuation of the most excellent, spiritual parts of the creation, when we live in a world that is actuated by them, and where every thing demonstrates them, as their effects, is more foolish than to doubt of the being of these gross materials which we see.

Sect. 6. How oft have I been convinced that there are good spirits with whom our souls have as certain communion, though not so sensible, as our life hath with the sun, and as we have with one another. And that there are evil and envious spirits that fight against our holiness and peace, as certain narratives of apparitions and witches, and too sad experience of temptations, do evince. And the marvellous diversity of creatures on earth, for kind and number; yea, the diversity of stars in heaven, as well as the diversities of angels and devils, do partly tell me, that though all be of one, and through one, and to one, yet absolute unity is the divine prerogative, and we must not presume to expect such perfection as to lose our specific or numerical diversity, by any union which

shall befall our souls. Nor can I reasonably doubt that so noble and active a nature as souls dwelling above in the lucid regions, in communion with their like, and with their betters, shall be without the activity, the pleasure, and felicity, which is suitable to their nature, their region, and their company. And my Saviour hath entered into the holiest, and hath assured me that there are many mansions in his Father's house; and that when we are absent from the body we shall be present with the Lord.

Sect. 7. Organical sight is given me for my use here in the body; and a serpent, or hawk, hath as much or more of this than I have. Mental knowledge reacheth further than sight, and is the act of a nobler faculty, and for a higher use. Though it be the soul itself embodied in the igneous spirits that seeth, yet it is by a higher and more useful faculty than it understandeth; and faith is not an understanding act; it knoweth things unseen, because they are revealed. Who can think that all believing, holy souls, that have passed hence from the beginning of the world, have been deceived in their faith and hope? And that all the wicked, worldly infidels, whose hope was only in this life, have been the wisest men, and have been in the right? If virtue and piety are faults or follies, and brutish sensuality be best, then why are not laws made to command sensuality, and forbid piety and virtue? To say this, is to deny humanity, and the wisdom of our Creator, and to feign the world to be governed by a lie, and to take the perfection of our nature for its disease, and our greatest disease for our perfection. But if piety and virtue be better than impiety and vice, the principles and necessary motives of them are certainly true, and the exercise of them is not in vain. What abominable folly and wickedness were it to say that the wicked only attain their ends, and that they all lose their labour, and live and die in miserable deceit, who seek to please God in hope of a better life to come, believing that God is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Would not this justify the foolish Manichees, that thought a bad God made this world; yea, and would infer that he not only made us for a mischief, but ruleth us to our deceit and hurt, and giveth us both natural and supernatural laws, in ill-will to us, to mislead us to our misery, and to fill our lives with needless troubles. Shall I not abhor every suggestion that containeth such inhuman absurdities as these? Wonderful, that Satan can keep up so

much unbelief in the world, while he must make men such fools, that he may make them unbelievers and ungodly.

Sect. 8. III. That my soul is no more heavenly, and my foretaste of future blessedness is so small, is partly the fruit of those many wilful sins by which I have quenched the Spirit that should be my comforter: and it is partly from our common state of darkness and strangeness, while the soul is in the flesh, and operateth as the body's form, according to its interest and capacity. Affections are more easily stirred up to things seen, than to things that are both unseen, and known only very defectively, by general, and not by clear, distinct apprehensions. And yet this, O this, is the misery and burden of my soul! Though I can say that I love God's truth and graces, his work, and his servants, and whatever of God I see in the world, and that this is a love of God in his creatures, word, and works; yet that I have no more desiring and delightful love of heaven, where his loveliness will be more fully opened to my soul, and that the thoughts of my speedy appearing there are no more joyful to me than they are, is my sin, and my calamity, and my shame. And if I did not see that it is so with other of the servants of Christ, as well as with me, I should doubt whether affections, so unproportionable to my profession, did not signify unsoundness in my belief. It is strange and shameful, that one that expecteth quickly to see the glorious world, and to enter the holy, celestial society, should be no more joyfully affected with these hopes, and that I should make any great matter of the pain, and languishing, and perishing of the flesh, when it is the common way to such an end. O hateful sin! that hath so darkened and corrupted souls as to estrange and indispose them to the only state of their hoped happiness. Alas! what did man, when he forsook the love and obedience of his God? How just it is, that this flesh and world should become our prison, which we would make our home, and would not use as our Lord appointed us, as our servant and way to our better state. Though our way must not be our home, our Father would not have been so strange to us in the way, if we had not unthankfully turned away from his grace and love.

Sect. 9. It is to us that know not the mysteries of infinite wisdom, the saddest thought that ever doth possess our minds, to consider that there is no more grace and holiness, knowledge of God, and communion with him in this world. That so few are saints, and those few so lamentably defective and imperfect.

That when the sun shineth on all the earth, the Sun of Righteousness shineth on so small a part of it, and so few live in the love of God, and the joyful hopes of future blessedness; and those few have so low a measure of it, and are corrupted and troubled with so many contrary affections. Infinite goodness is not undisposed to do good. He that made us capable of holy and heavenly affections, gave us not that capacity in vain; and yet, alas! how little of God and glory taketh up the hearts of men!

But man hath no cause to grudge at God. The devils, before their fall, were not made indefectible; divine wisdom is delighted in the diversity of his works, and maketh them not all of equal excellency. Free will was to act its part; hell is not to be as good as heaven: and sin hath made earth to be next to hell: so much sin, so much hell. What is sin but a wilful forsaking of God? And can we forsake him, and yet love him, and enjoy his love? God's kingdom is not to be judged of by his gaol or gibbets. We wilfully forsook the light, and made the world a dungeon to ourselves. And, when recovering light doth shine unto us, how unthankfully do we usually entertain it? We cannot have the conduct and comfort of it while we shut our eyes, and turn away. And what though God give not all men an overcoming measure, nor to the best so much as they desire: the earth is but a spot, or print, of God's creation; not so much as an ant hillock to a kingdom, or, perhaps, to all the earth. And who is scandalised because the world hath an heap of ants in it, yea, or a nest of snakes, that are not men? The vast, unmeasurable worlds of light which are above us, are possessed by inhabitants suitable to their glory. A casement, or crevice of light, or a candle, in this darksome world, is an unspeakable mercy; yea, that we may but hear of a better world, and may seek it in hope. We must not grudge that in our prison we have not that presence of our King, and pleasures of the kingdom, as innocent and free subjects have: hope of pardon, and a speedy deliverance, are great mercies to malefactors.

Sect. 10. And if my want of the knowledge and love of God, and joyful communion with the heavenly society, be my prison, and as the suburbs of hell, should it not make me long for the day of my redemption, and the glorious liberty of the sons of God? My true desires of deliverance, and of holiness and perfection, are my evidences that I shall obtain them. As the

will is the sinner, so it is the obstinate continuance of a will to sin, which is the bondage, and the cause of continued sin: and a continued hell is continued sin, as to the first part at least. Therefore, they that continue in hell, do continue in a sinning will, and so continue in a love and willingness of so much of hell. So far as God maketh us willing to be delivered from sin, so far we are delivered; and our initial, imperfect deliverance is the way to more. If pains, then, make me groan for ease, and sickness make me wish for health, why should not my remnants of ignorance, unbelief, and strangeness to God, occasion me to long for the day of my salvation? This is the greatest of all my troubles; and should it not, then, be the greatest wearying burden from which I should earnestly desire to be eased? As grace never doth hurt efficiently, and yet may be ill used, and do hurt objectively, (as to them that are proud of it,) so sin never doth good efficiently, and of itself, and yet objectively may do good; for sin may be the object of grace, and so to use it is not sin. My unbelief, and darkness, and disaffection, and inordinate love of this life, do, of themselves, most hinder my desires of deliverance, and of a better life; but, objectively, what more fit to make me weary of such a grievous state? Were my unbelief and earthly mind predominant, they would chain my affections to this world; or if I were constrainedly weary of a miserable life, I should have no comfortable hopes of a better. But as it is the nature of my sin to draw down my heart from God and glory, it is the nature of my faith, and hope, and love, to carry it upward, and to desire the heavenly perfection: not to love death, but to love that which is beyond it. And have I been so many years in the school of Christ, learning both how to live and die, begging and studying for this grace, and exercising it against this sinful flesh, and shall I now, after all, find flesh more powerful to draw me downward, than faith, hope, and love, to carry my desires up to God?

Sect. 11. 'O God forbid! O thou that freely gavest me thy grace, maintain it to the last against its enemies, and make it finally victorious! It came from thee; it hath been preserved by thee; it is on thy side, and wholly for thee. O let it not now fail, and be conquered by blind and base carnality, or by the temptations of a hellish, conquered enemy; without it I had lived as a beast, and without it I should die more miserably than a beast. It is thine image which thou lovest; it is a

divine nature, and heavenly beam. What will a soul be without it, but a dungeon of darkness, a devil for malignity, and dead to holiness and heaven? Without it, who shall plead thy cause against the devil, world, and flesh? Without thy glory earth is but earth: without thy natural efficacy, it would be nothing: without thy wise and potent ordination it would be but a chaos: and, without thy grace, it would be a hell. O rather deny me the light of the sun, than the light of thy countenance! Less miserable had I been without life or being, than without thy grace. Without thee, and my Saviour's help, I can do nothing; I did not live without thee; I could not pray or learn without thee; I never could conquer a temptation without thee; and can I die, or be prepared to die, without thee? Alas! I shall but say as Philip of Christ, "I know not whither my soul is going, and how then shall I know the way?" My Lord having loved his own in the world, did love them to the end. Thou lovest fidelity and perseverance in thy servants; even those that in his sufferings forsook him and fled, yet are commended and rewarded by Christ, for continuing with him in his temptations. (Luke xxii. 28.) And wilt thou forsake a sinner in his extremity, who consenteth to thy covenant, and would not forsake thee? My God, I have often sinned against thee, but yet thou knowest I would fain be thine: I have not served thee with the resolution, fidelity, and delight, as such a master should have been served, but yet I would not forsake thy service, nor change my master, or my work. I can say, with thy servant Paul, that thou art the God whose I am, and whom I serve: and O that I could serve thee better! For to serve thee is but to receive thy grace, and to use it for my own and others' good, and so to glorify thee, and please thy will, which, being love itself, is best pleased when we receive and do most good. (Acts xxvii. 23.) I have not loved thee as infinite goodness, and love itself, and fatherly bounty, should have been loved; but yet I would not forsake thy family. And nothing in this world is more my grief, than that I love thee no more. Forsake not, then, a sinner that would not forsake thee, that looketh every hour towards thee, that feeleth it as a piece of hell to be so dark and strange unto thee, that gropeth, and groaneth, and gaspeth after thee; feeling, to his greatest sorrow, (though thou art every where,) that while he is present in the body, he is absent from the Lord. My Lord, I have nothing to do in this world, but to seek and serve thee. I have

nothing to do with a heart and its affections, but to breathe after thee: I have nothing to do with my tongue and pen, but to speak to thee, and for thee, and to publish thy glory, and thy will. What have I to do with all my reputation, and interest in my friends, but to increase thy church, and propagate thy holy truth and service? What have I to do with my remaining time, even these last and languishing hours, but to look up unto thee, and wait for thy grace, and thy salvation? O pardon all my carnal thoughts, and all my unthankful neglects of thy precious grace, and love, and all my wilful sin against thy truth and thee; and let the fuller communications of thy forfeited grace, now tell me by experience that thou dost forgive me! Even under the terrible law thou didst tell man thy very nature, by proclaiming thy name, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.) And is not the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ revealed in the gospel for our more abundant faith and consolation? My God, I know as I cannot love thee according to thy loveliness, so I cannot trust thee according to thy faithfulness: I can never be sufficiently confident of thy all-sufficient power, thy wisdom, and thy goodness. When I have said, as Psalm lxxvii. 7, "Will the Lord cast off for ever? And will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail to generations? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" Conscience hath replied, that this is my infirmity; I never wanted comfort, because thou wantedst mercy; but because I wanted faith and fitness to receive it, and perceive it. But hast thou not mercy also to give me, even that fitness, and that faith? My God, all is of thee, and through thee, and all is to thee, and when I have the felicity, the glory of all for ever will be thine. None that trusteth in thee, (according to thy nature and promise,) shall be ashamed. If I can live and die in trusting in thee, surely I shall not be confounded.

Sect. 12. Why, then, should it seem a difficult question, how I may, willingly, leave this world, and my soul depart to Christ in peace? The same grace which regenerated me, must bring me to my desired end, as the same principle of vegetation which causeth the end, must bring the fruit to sweet maturity; I. Believe and trust thy Father, thy Saviour, and thy Comforter. II.

And hope for the joyful entertainments of his love, and for the blessed state which he hath promised. III. And long, by love, for nearer union and communion with him; and thus, O my soul, thou mayest depart in peace.

1. How sure is the promise of God! How suitable to his love, and to the nature of our souls, and to the operations of every grace? It is initially performed here, whilst our desires are turned towards him, and the heavenly seed and spark is here ingenerated in a soul that was dead and dark, and disaffected. Is it any strange thing for fire to ascend? yea, or the fiery principle of vegetation in a tree, to carry up the earthy matter to a great height? Is it strange that rivers should hasten to the sea? Whither should spirits go, but to the region or world of spirits? And whither should Christ's members, and holy spirits go but to himself, and the heavenly society? And is not that a more holy and glorious place and state than this below? Earth is between heaven and hell; a place of gross and passive matter, where spirits may, indeed, operate upon that which needeth them, and where they may be detained awhile in such operation, or as incorporated forms, if not incarcerated delinquents; but it is not their centre, end, or home. Even sight and reason might persuade me, that all the noble, invisible powers, that operate on this lower world, do principally belong unto a higher; and what can earth add to their essence, dignity, or perfection?

Sect. 13. But why, O my soul, art thou so vainly solicitous to have formal, clear, distinct conceptions of the celestial world, and the individuation and operations of separated souls, any more than of the angels? While thou art the formal principle of an animated body, thy conceptions must be suitable to their present state and use. When thou art possessed of a better state, thou shalt know it as a possessor ought to do; for such a knowledge as thou lookest after, is part of the possession, and to long to know and love, in clearness and perfection, is to long to possess. It is thy Saviour, and his glorified ones, that are comprehensors and possessors; and it is his knowledge which must now be most of thy satisfaction. To seek his prerogative to thyself, is vain, usurping arrogance. Wouldest thou be a God and Saviour to thyself? Oh, consider how much of the fall is in this selfish care and desire to be as God, in knowing that of good and evil which belongeth not to thee, but to God, to know. Thou knowest, past doubt, that there is a God of infinite per-

fection, who is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Labour more to know thy duty to this God, and absolutely trust him, as to the particularities of thy felicity and reward. Thou didst trust thy parents to provide thee food and raiment, when thou didst but dutifully obey them; though they could have forsaken thee, or killed thee every hour, thou didst never fear it. Thou hast trusted physicians to give thee even ungrateful medicines, without inquiring after every ingredient, or fearing lest they should wilfully give thee poison. I trust a barber with my throat: I trust a boatman or shipmaster with my life; yea, my horse, that might cast me; because I have no reason to distrust them, saving their insufficiency and uncertainty, as creatures. If a pilot undertake to bring thee to the Indies, thou canst trust his conduct, though thou know thyself neither the ship, nor how to govern it; neither the way nor the place to which thou art conveyed. And must not thy God and Saviour be trusted to bring thee safe to heaven, unless he will satisfy all thy inquiries of the individuation and operation of spirits? Leave unsearchable and useless questions to him that can easily resolve them, and to those to whom the knowledge of them doth belong. Thou dost but entangle thyself in sin and self-vexation, while thou wouldest take God's work upon thee, and wouldest know that for thyself, which he must know for thee. Thy knowledge and care for it did not precede, nor prepare for, thy generation, nor for the motion of one pulse or breath, or for the concoction of one bit of all thy food, or the continuance of thy life one hour; supposing but thy care to use the means which God appointed thee, and to avoid things hurtful, and to beg his blessing. The command of being careful for nothing, and casting all thy care on God, who careth for us, obligeth us in all things that are God's part; and for our souls as well as for our bodies: yea, to trust him with the greatest of our concerns is our greatest duty; supposing we be careful about our own part, viz., to use the means, and obey his precepts. To dispose of a departing soul is God's part, and not ours: oh! how much evil is in this distrustful, self-providing care! If I did but know what I would know about my soul and myself; and if I might but choose what condition it should be in, and be the final disposer of it myself, O what satisfaction and joy would it afford me! And is not this to be partly a God to myself? Is he not fitter to know, and choose, and dispose of me, than I am? I could trust myself easily, even my wit

and will, in such a choice, if I had but power; and cannot I trust God and my Redeemer, without all this care, and fear, and trouble, and all these particular inquiries? If you are conveying your child in a boat, or coach, by water, or by land, and he at every turn be crying out, 'O father, whither do we go?' or, 'what shall I do?' or, 'I shall be drowned, or fall.' Is it not rather his trust in you, than the particular satisfaction of his ignorant doubts, that must quiet and silence him? Be not, then, foolishly distrustful and inquisitive. Make not thyself thy own disquieter or tormentor, by an inordinate care of thy own security. Be not cast down, O departing soul, nor, by unbelief, disquieted within me. Trust in God, for thou shalt quickly, by experience, be taught to give him thanks and praise, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

Sect. 14. O, what clear reason, what great experience, do command me to trust him, absolutely and implicitly to trust him, and to distrust myself!

1. He is essential, infinite, perfection, power, wisdom, and love. There is in him all that should invite and encourage rational trust, and nothing that should discourage it.

2. There is nothing in any creature to be trusted, but God in that creature, or God working in and by it. Distrust him, and there is nothing to be trusted. Not the earth to bear me, nor the air to breathe in, much less any mutable friend.

3. I am altogether his own, his own by right, and his own by devotion and consent. And shall I not trust him with his own.

4. He is the great benefactor of all the world, that giveth all good to every creature, not by constraint, or by commutation, but as freely as the sun giveth forth its light. And shall we not trust the sun to shine?

5. He is my Father and special benefactor, and hath taken me into his family as his child. And shall I not trust my heavenly Father?

6. He hath given me his Son as the great pledge of his love, and what, then, will he think too dear for me? Will he not with him give me all things? (Rom. viii. 32.)

7. His Son came purposely to reveal the Father's unspeakable love, and purposely to save us. And shall I not trust him that hath proclaimed his love and reconciliation by such a messenger from heaven?

8. He hath given me the Spirit of his Son, even the spirit of adoption, which is the surest character of his child, the witness,

pledge, and earnest of heaven, the name and mark of God upon me, holiness to the Lord. And yet shall I not believe his love, and trust him ?

9. He hath made me a member of his Son, and so far already united me to him. And will he not take care of the members of his Son ? Will he lose those that are given him ? Is not Christ to be trusted with his members ?

10. I am his interest, and the interest of his son. Freely beloved ; dearly bought ! for whom so much is suffered and done, that he is pleased to call us his peculiar treasure. And may I not trust him with his dear-bought treasure ?

11. He hath stated me in a relation to angels, who rejoiced at my repentance, and to the heavenly society, which shall not miss the smallest part. Angels shall not lose their joy, nor ministrations.

12. He is in covenant with me ; even the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He hath given me many great and precious promises, and shall I fear lest he will break his word or covenant ?

13. My Saviour is the forerunner, entered into the holiest, and there appearing and interceding for me. And this after he had conquered death, and risen again to assure me of a future life, and ascended into heaven, to show us whither we must ascend ; and that after these comfortable words, " Say to my brethren, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." (John xx. 17.) And shall I not follow him through death, and trust such a Guide and Captain of my salvation ?

14. He is there to prepare a place for me, and will take me to himself. And may I not confidently expect it ?

15. He told a malefactor on the cross, that he should be that day with him in paradise, to tell believing sinners what they may expect.

16. The church, by the article of his descent into hell, hath signified their common belief that his separated soul had its subsistence and operation, and did not sleep or perish, to tell us the immortality of separated souls.

17. His apostles, and other servants, have on earth served him with all these expectations.

18. The spirits of the perfected just are now in possession of what I hope for. And I am a follower of them who, by faith and patience, have attained the promised felicity. And may I not trust him to save me, who hath already saved millions in this way, when I could trust a ferryman to pass me over a river,

that had safely passed over thousands before me? or I could trust a physician who cureth all that he undertaketh of the same disease.

19. I must be at his disposal whether I will or not. I shall live while he will, and die when he will, and go whither he will. I may sin, and vex my soul with fears, and cares, and sorrows, but I shall never prevail against his will.

20. Therefore, there is no rest for souls but in the will of God. That will created us, and that will did govern us, and that will shall be fulfilled on us. It was our efficient and our regent cause, and it shall be our end. Where else is it that we should rest? in the will of men, or angels, or in our own wills? All creatures are but creatures, and our own wills have undone us; they have misgoverned us, and they are our greatest enemies; our disease, our prison, and our death, till they are brought over to the will of God. Till then they are like a foot out of joint; like a child or subject in rebellion. There is no rectitude or health, no order, no peace or true felicity, but in the conformity of our wills to the will of God. And shall I die in distrustful striving against his will, and desiring to keep up my own before it?

21. What abundant experience have I had of God's fidelity and love? And after all this shall I not trust him? His undeserved mercy gave me being; it chose my parents; it gave them a tender love to me, and desire of my good; it taught them to instruct me early in his word, and to educate me in his fear; it chose me suitable company and habitation; it gave me betimes a teachable ingeny; it chose my schoolmasters; it brought to my hands many excellent and suitable books; it gave me some profitable, public teachers; it placed me in the best of lands on earth, and I think in the best of ages which that land had seen; it did early destroy all great expectations and desires of the world, teaching me to bear the yoke from my youth, and causing me rather to groan under my infirmities, than to fight with strong and potent lusts; it chastened me betimes, but did not destroy me. Great mercy hath trained me up all my days, since I was nineteen years of age, in the school of affliction, to keep my sluggish soul awake in the constant expectations of my change, and to kill my pride and overvaluing of this world, and to lead all my studies to the most necessary things, and as a spur to excite my soul to seriousness, and especially to save me from the supine neglect and loss of

time. Oh! what unspeakable mercy hath a life of constant but gentle chastisement proved to me! It urged me, against all dull delays, to make my calling and election sure, and to make ready my accounts, as one that must quickly give them up to God. The face of death, and nearness of eternity, did much convince me what books to read, what studies to prefer and prosecute, what company and conversation to choose. It drove me early into the vineyard of the Lord, and taught me to preach as a dying man to dying men. It was divine love and mercy which made sacred truth so pleasant to me, that my life hath been (under all my infirmities) almost a constant recreation and delight, in its discoveries, contemplation, and practical use: how happy a teacher have I had! What excellent help, and sweet illumination! How far beyond my expectation hath divine mercy encouraged me in his sacred work! How congruously did he choose every place of my ministration and habitation to this day, without my own forecast or seeking! When, and where, since he first sent me forth, did I labour in vain? How many are gone to heaven, and how many are in the way, to whom he hath blessed the word, which, in weakness I did, by his grace and providence, deliver! Many good Christians are glad of now and then an hour's time to meditate on God's word, and recreate themselves in his holy worship; but God hath allowed and called me to make it the constant business of my life. My library hath afforded me both profitable and pleasant company and help, at all times, whenever I would use them. I have dwelt among the shining lights, which the learned, wise, and holy men of all ages have set up, and left to illuminate the world. How many comfortable hours have I had in the society of living saints, and in the love of faithful friends. How many joyful days have I had in the solemn assemblies, where God hath been worshipped in seriousness and alacrity, by concordant (though imperfect) saints. Where the spirit of Christ hath manifested his presence, by helping myself and my brethren in speaking, and the people in ready, delightful hearing, and all of us in loving and gladly receiving his doctrine, covenant, and laws. How unworthy was such a sinful worm as I (who never had any academical helps, nor much from the mouth of any teacher), that books should become so great a blessing to me; and that, quite beyond my own intentions, God should induce or constrain me to provide any such like helps for others! How unworthy was I to be kept from the multiplied snares of

sects and errors which reigned in this age, and to be used as a means for other men's preservation and reduction; and to be kept in a love of unity and peace; how unworthy was I that God should make known to me so much of his reconciling truth, while extremes did round about prevail, and were commended to the churches by the advantages of piety on one side, and of worldly prosperity and power on the other: and that God should use me above forty years in so comfortable a work as to plead and write for love, peace, and concord, and to vouchsafe me so much success therein as he hath done, notwithstanding the general prevalency of the contentious military tribe. Mercy I have had in peace, and liberty in times of violence; and mercy I have had in wars, living two years in safety in the city of defence, in the very midst of the land (Coventry), and seeing no enemy while the kingdom was in wars and flames; and only hearing of the common calamities round about: and when I went abroad and saw the effects of human folly and fury, and of God's displeasure, he mercifully kept me from hurting any one, and being hurt by any; how many a time hath he preserved me by day and night, in difficulties and dangers, from the malice of Satan, and from the wrath of man, and from accidents which threatened sudden death; while I beheld the ruins of towns and countries, and the fields covered with the carcasses of the slain, I was preserved, and returned home in peace. And oh, how great was the mercy he showed me, in a teachable, tractable, peaceable, humble, unanimous people! So many in number, and so exemplary in quality; who to this day keep their integrity and concord, when violence hath separated me from them above thirty years: yea, the like mercy of acceptance and success beyond my expectation, he hath showed me everywhere; I have had opportunity of free ministration; even where there were many adversaries I have had an open door; in the midst of human wrath and rage he hath preserved my liberty beyond expectation, and continued my acceptance and success. When I might not speak by voice to any single congregation, he enabled me to speak by writing to many; and for the success of my plainest and popular writings, which cost me least, I can never be sufficiently thankful; some of which he sent to preach abroad, in other languages, in foreign lands. When my mouth, with eighteen hundred or two thousand more, had been many years stopped, he hath since opened them in some degree; and the sufferings intended us by men, have been partly put by,

and partly much alleviated, by his providence; and the hardness of our terms hath not so much hindered the success of faithful labours as we feared, and as others hoped it would have done. I have had the comfort of seeing some peace and concord, and prosperity of truth and piety, kept up, under the utmost opposition of diabolical and human power, policy, and wrath: when I have been sent to the common jail for my service and obedience to him, he hath there kept me in peace, and soon delivered me. He hath made the mouths of my greatest enemies, who have studied my defamation and my ruin, to become my witnesses and compurgators, and to cross their own designs. How wonderful is it that I should so long dwell in so much peace, in the midst of those that seemed to want neither power nor skill, and much less will, to tread me down into contempt and misery! And, oh! how many a danger, fear, and pain hath he delivered this frail and languishing body from! How oft hath he succoured me, when flesh, and heart, and art have failed! He hath cured my consuming coughs, and, many a time, stayed my flowing blood: he hath eased my pained limbs, and supported a weary, macerated skeleton: he hath fetched me up from the jaws of death, and reversed the sentence which men have passed on me. How many thousand weary days have been sweetened with his pleasant work; and how many thousand painful, weary nights have had a comfortable morning! How many thousand strong and healthful persons have been taken away by death, whilst I have been upheld under all this weakness! Many a time have I cried to the Lord in my trouble, and he hath delivered me out of my distress. I have had fifty years added to my days since I would have been full glad of Hezekiah's promise of fifteen. Since the day that I first preached his gospel, I expected not, of long time, to live above a year; and I have lived since then fifty years. When my own prayers were cold and unbelieving, how many hundreds have prayed for me? And what strange deliverances, encouraging fasting and prayer, have I oft had, upon their importunate requests? My friends have been faithful, and the few that proved unfaithful have profitably taught me to place no confidence in man, and not to be inordinately affected to any thing on earth; for I was forsaken by none of them, but those few that I excessively valued and overloved. My relations have been comfortable to me, contrary to my deserts, and much beyond my expectations. My servants have been faithful: my neighbours

have been kind: my enemies have been impotent, harmless, or profitable: my superiors have honoured me by their respectful words; and while they have afflicted me, as supposing me a *remora* to their designs, they have not destroyed but protected me. To my inferiors, God hath made me, in my low capacity, somewhat helpful. I have been protected in ordinary health and safety, when the raging pestilence came near my habitation, and consumed a hundred thousand citizens: my dwelling hath been safe when I have seen the glory of the land in flames, and after beheld the dismal ruins. When violence separated me from my too much beloved library, and drove me into a poor and smoky house, I never had more help of God, nor did more difficult work than there. What pleasant retirements and quietness in the country have been the fruits of persecuting wrath? And I must not forget, when I had more public liberty, how he saved me and all my hearers, even by a wonder, from being buried in the ruins of the fabric where we were; and others, from the calamities, scandal, and lamentations, which would else have followed: and it is not a mercy to be extenuated, that when the tongues and pens of all sects among us, and of proud self-exalters, and of some worthy, pious, differing brethren, have been long and vehemently bent against me, when my infamy hath been endeavoured, by abundance of volumes, by the backbiting of angry dividers of all sorts, and by the calumniating accusations of some that were too high to be gainsayed, and would not endure me to answer them, and vindicate my innocency; yet, all these together were never able to fasten their accusations, and procure any common belief, nor to bring me under the designed contempt, much less to break my comforts, encouragements, or labours.

These, all these, and very many more than these, are my experiences of that wondrous mercy which hath measured my pilgrimage, and filled up my days. Never did God break his promise with me; never did he fail me, nor forsake me. Had I not provoked him by rash and wilful sinning, how little interruption of my peace and comforts had I ever been likely to have had! And shall I now distrust him at the last? Shall I not trust, and quietly trust, that infinite wisdom, love, and power, whom I have so long trusted and found so good?

Nature teacheth man to love best those animals that are tame and tractable, that trust us and love us, that will come to our hands, and love our company, that will be familiar with us, and

follow us, be it horse or dog, beasts or birds: but those that are wild and live in woods, and fly from the face of man, are taken to be the game and prey of any one that can catch and kill them. And shall my foolish soul thus wildly fly from the face of God? Shall his children be like the fearful hare, or like a guilty Cain, or like an unbelieving Sadducee, that either believeth not, or hopeth not for, the forgiveness of sin, and the life everlasting? Doth not the spirit of adoption incline us to love our Father's presence, and to be loath to be long from home? To distrust all creatures, even thyself, is not unreasonable; but to distrust God hath no just excuse. Fly from sin, from Satan, from temptations, from the world, from sinful flesh and idol self; but fly not from him that is goodness, love, and joy itself. Fear thine enemy, but trust thy Father. If thy heart be reconciled to him and his service, by the Spirit, he is certainly reconciled to thee through Christ: and if he be for thee, and justify and love thee, who shall be against thee, or condemn thee, or separate thee from his love? If thy unreconciled will do make thee doubt of his reconciliation, it is time to abhor and lay by thy enmity. Consent, and be sure that he consenteth. Be willing to be his, and in holiness to serve him, and to be united in joyful glory to him; and then be sure that he is willing to accept thee, and receive thee to that glory. O dark and sinful soul! how little dost thou know thy friend, thyself, or God, if thou canst more easily and quietly trust thy life, thy soul, and hopes to the will of thy friend, or of thyself, if thou hadst power, than to the will of God. Every dog would be at home, and with his master; much more every ingenuous child with his father: and though enemies distrust us, wife and children will not do so, while they believe us just. And hath God ever showed himself either unfaithful or unmerciful to me?

To thee, O Lord, as to a faithful Creator, I commit my soul. (1 Pet. iv. 19.) I know that thou art the faithful God, who keepest covenant and mercy with them that love thee and keep thy commandments. (Deut. vii. 9.) Thou art faithful who hast called me to the communion of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Cor. i. 9.) Thy faithfulness hath saved me in and from temptation; (1 Cor. x. 13;) it hath stablished me, and kept me from prevailing evil; (2 Thess. iii. 3;) and it will keep my spirit, soul, and body to the coming of Christ. (1 Thess. v. 23, 24.) It is in faithfulness that thou hast afflicted me; (Psalm cxix. 75;) and shall not I trust thee, then, to save me?

It is thy faithful word, that all thine elect shall obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory; and if we be dead with him, shall live with him, and if we suffer, we shall also reign with him. (2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.)

To thee, O my Saviour, I commit my soul: it is thine own by redemption; it is thine own by covenant; it is marked and sealed by thy Spirit as thine own, and thou hast promised not to lose it. (John vi. 39.) Thou wast made like us thy brethren, that thou mightest be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for our sins. By thy blood we have boldness to enter into the holiest, even by the new and living consecrated way. Cause me to draw near with a sincere heart, in full assurance of faith, by thee that art the High Priest over the house of God; for he is faithful that has promised life through thee. (Heb. xix. 20—23.) Thy name is faithful and true, (Rev. xix. 11,) and faithful and true are all thy promises. (Rev. xxii. 6, and xxi. 5.) Thou hast promised rest to weary souls that come to thee. (Matt. xi. 28; 2 Thess. i. 7.) I am weary of suffering, and weary of sin; weary of my flesh, and weary of my darkness, and dulness, and distance, and of this wicked, blind, unrighteous, and confounded world: and whither should I look for rest but home to my heavenly Father and to thee? I am but a bruised reed, but thou wilt not break me; I am but a smoking flax, but thou wilt not quench what thy grace hath kindled; but thou, in whose name the nations trust, wilt bring forth judgment unto victory. (Matt. xii. 20, 21.) The Lord redeemeth the souls of his servants, and none of them that trust in thee shall be desolate. (Psalm xxxiv. 22.) Therefore will I wait on thy name, for it is good, and will trust in the mercy of God for ever. (Psalm lii. 8, 9.) The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him. (Nahum i. 7.) Sinful fear is a snare; but he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be set on high. (Prov. xxix. 25.) Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, and such as turn aside to lies. (Psalm xl. 4.) Thou art my hope, O Lord God, thou art my trust from my youth. By thee have I been holden up from the womb, and my praise shall be continually of thee. Cast me not off now in the time of age. Forsake me not when my strength faileth; O God, thou hast taught me from my youth, and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now, also, when I am old and grey, O God, forsake me not.

(Psalm xvii. 5, 6, 9, 17, 18.) Leave not my soul destitute; for mine eyes are toward thee, and my trust is in thee. (Psalm xiv. 8.) I had fainted unless I had believed, to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living; even where they that live shall die no more. The sun may cease to shine on man, and the earth to bear us; but God will never cease to be love, nor to be faithful in his promises. Blessed be the Lord, who hath commanded me so safe and quieting a duty as to trust him, and cast all my cares on him, as on one that hath promised to care for me!

II. And blessed be God, who hath made it my duty to hope for his salvation. Hope is the ease, yea, the life of our hearts, that else would break, yea, die within us: despair is no small part of hell: God cherisheth hope as he is the lover of souls. Satan, our enemy, cherisheth despair, when his way of blind presumption faileth. As fear is a foretaste of evil, before it is felt: so hope doth anticipate, and foretaste salvation, before it is possessed. It is then worldly hypocrites' hope that perisheth, for all that hope for true or durable happiness on earth, in the pleasures of this perishing flesh, must needs be deceived. But happy is he who hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God, which made heaven and earth, which keepeth truth for ever. (Psalm cxlvi. 5, 6.) Wo to me, were my hope only in the time and matters of this fleshly life; (1 Cor. xv. 19;) but the righteous hath hope in his death; (Prov. xiv. 32;) and hope maketh not ashamed. (Rom. v. 5.) Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, whose hope the Lord is. (Jer. xvii. 7.) Lay hold then, O my soul, upon the hope which is set before thee; (Heb. vi. 18;) it is thy firm and steadfast anchor, (ver. 19,) without it thou wilt be as a shipwrecked vessel. Thy foundation is sure; it is God himself; our faith and hope are both in God. (1 Pet. i. 21.) It is Jesus our Lord who is risen from the dead, and reigneth in glory, Lord of all. (1 Tim. i. 1.) Yea, it is the Christ, who by faith doth dwell within us, who is our hope of glory. (Eph. iii. 17; Col. i. 27.) In this hope, which is better than the law that Moses gave, it is that we draw nigh to God; (Heb. vii. 19;) it is the Holy Ghost that is both our evidence, and the efficient of our hope. (Gal. v. 5; Rom. viii. 16, 23.) By him we hope for that which we see not, and therefore wait in patience for it; (ver. 24, 25;) by hope we are saved. It is an encouraging grace which will make us stir, when as despair doth kill endea-

yours ; it cureth sloth, and makes us diligent and constant to the end, and by this doth help us to full assurance. (Heb. vi. 11, 12.) It is a desiring grace, and would fain obtain the glory hoped for. It is a quieting and comforting grace. (Rom. xv. 4.) The God of hope doth fill us with joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. (Ver. 13.) Shake off despondency, O my soul, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (Rom. v. 2.) Believe in hope, though dying flesh would tell thee that it is against hope. (Rom. iv. 18.) God, that cannot lie, hath confirmed his covenant by his immutable oath, that we might have strong consolation who are fled for refuge to the hope which is set before us. (Heb. vi. 18.) What blessed preparations are made for our hope ; and shall we now let the tempter shake it, or discourage it ? The abundant mercy of God the Father hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us. (1 Pet. i. 3.) Grace teacheth us to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world, as looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour. (Tit. ii. 12, 13.) We are renewed by the Holy Ghost, and justified by grace, that we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Tit. iii. 6, 7.) We are illuminated, that we may know the hope of Christ's calling, and what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. (Eph. i. 18, 19.) The hope that is laid up for us in heaven, is the chief doctrine of the gospel, which bringeth life and immortality into clearer light. (Col. i. 5 ; 2 Tim. i. 10.) It is for this hope that we keep a conscience void of offence, and that God is served in the world ; (Acts xxiv. 15, 16, and xxvi. 7 ;) wherefore gird up the loins of thy mind ; put on this helmet, the hope of salvation ; (1 Thess. v. 8 ;) and let not death seem to thee as it doth to them that have no hope. (1 Thess. iv. 13.) The love of our Father, and our Saviour, have given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, to comfort our hearts, and establish them in every good word and work. (2 Thess. ii. 16, 17.) Keep, therefore, the rejoicing of hope, firm to the end. (Heb. iii. 6.) Continue grounded and settled in the faith, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel. (Col. i. 23 ; 1 Pet. i. 13.) And now, Lord, what wait I for ? my hope is in thee. (Psalm xxxix. 7.)

Uphold me according to thy word, that I may live; and let me not be ashamed of my hope. (Psalm cxix. 116.) Though mine iniquities testify against me, yet, O thou that art the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble, be not as a stranger to my soul. (Jer. xiv. 7, 8.) Thy name is called upon by me, oh, forsake me not! (Ver. 9.) Why have our eyes beheld thy wonders, and why have we had thy covenant, and thy mercies, but that we might set our hope in God. (Psalm lxxviii. 5, 7.) Remember the word to thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. (Psalm cxix. 49.) If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who should stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the Lord; my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope; I will hope in the Lord, for with him there is mercy and plenteous redemption. (Psalm cxxx. 3—5, 7.) For he taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy. (Psalm cxlvii. 11.) Though flesh and heart fail, the Lord is the rock of my heart; he is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him. The Lord is good to them that wait for him; to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that I should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. It is good for me that I have borne the yoke in my youth, and that I keep silence, and put my mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope. (Psalm lxxiii. 26; Lam. iii. 24—27, 29.)

God need not flatter such worms as we, nor promise us that which he never meaneth to perform. He hath laid the rudiments of our hope, in a nature capable of desiring, seeking, and thinking of another life: he hath called me by grace, to actual desires and endeavours; and some foretaste he hath vouchsafed. I look for no heaven, but the perfection of divine life, light, and love, in endless glory with Christ and his holy ones. And this he hath begun in me already; and shall I not boldly hope when I have the capacity, the promise, and the earnest and foretaste? Is it not God himself that hath caused me to hope? Was not nature, promise, and grace from him? And can a soul miscarry, and be deceived, that departeth hence in a hope of God's own causing, and encouraging? Lord, I have lived in hope, I have prayed in hope, I have laboured, suffered, and waited in hope; and, by thy grace, I will die in hope. And is not this according to thy word and will? And wilt thou cast away a soul that hopeth in thee, by thine own command

and operation? Had wealth and honour, or continuance on earth, or the favour of man, been my reward and hope, my hope and I had died together. Were this our best, how vain were man! But the Lord liveth, and my Redeemer is glorified, and intercedeth for me; and the same Spirit is in heaven, who is in my heart, (as the same sun is in the firmament which is in my house,) and the promise is sure to all Christ's seed. And millions are now in heaven, that once did live and die in hope; they were sinners once, as now I am; they had no other Saviour, no other Sanctifier, no other promise, than I now have; confessing that they were strangers here, they looked for a better country, and for a city that had foundations, even a heavenly, where now they are: and shall I not follow them in hope that have sped so well? Hope then, O my soul, unto the end. (1 Pet. i. 13.) From henceforth, and for ever, hope in the Lord. (Psalm cxxxii. 13.) I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more; my mouth shall show forth thy righteousness and salvation. (Psalm lxxi. 14, 15.) The Lord is at my right hand; I shall not be moved. My heart, therefore, is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall dwell confidently, and rest in hope; for God hath showed me the path of life: in his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand, are pleasures for evermore. (Psalm xvi. 8—11.)

III. What then remaineth, O my soul, but that, in trust and hope, thou love thy God, thy Saviour, thy Comforter, the glorious society, thy own perfection in glorious, endless, heavenly life, and light, and love, and the joyful praises of Jehovah, better than this burden of painful and corruptible flesh, and this howling wilderness, the habitation of serpents and untamed brutes, where unbelief and murmuring, lust and folly, injustice and uncharitableness, tyranny and divisions, pride and contention, have long provoked God, and wearied thee? Where the vintage and harvest is thorns and thistles, sin and sorrows, cares and crosses, manured by manifold temptations. How odious is that darkness and unbelief, that unholiness and disaffection, that deadness and stupidity, which maketh such a work as this so reasonable, necessary, and pleasant a work, to seem unsuitable or hard? Is it unsuitable or hard to the eye, to see the sun and light; or by it to see the beautified world? or for a man to love his life or health, his father, or his friend? What should be easier to a nature that hath rational love, than to love

him that is essential love itself. He that loveth all, and giveth to all the loving faculty, should be loved by all; and he that hath specially loved me, should be specially loved by me.

Love is the perfection of all thy preparations. It desireth to please God, and therefore to be in the most pleasing state, and freed from all that is displeasing to him, which is not to be hoped for on earth. It desireth all suitable nearness, acquaintance, union, and communion. It is weary of distance, estrangedness, and alien society and affairs. It taketh advantage of every notice, intimation, or mention of God, to renew and exercise these desires. Every message and mercy from him is fuel for love, and, while we are short of perfection, stir up our desires after more. When love tasteth of the grapes, it would have the vine. When it tasteth of the fruits, it would dwell where they grow, and possess the land. Its thoughts of proximity and fruition are sweet; no other person or thing can satisfy it. The soul is where it loveth. If our friend dwell in our hearts by love, and if fleshly pleasure, riches, and honour, do dwell in the heart of the voluptuous, the covetous, and the proud, surely God and our Redeemer, the heavenly society, holiness, and glory, do dwell in the heart which loveth them with a fervent love. And if heaven dwell in my heart, shall I not desire to dwell in heaven? Light and light, fire and fire, are not more inclined to union than love and love; gracious love, and glorious love. Would divine, original, universal love communicate and pour out itself more plentifully upon my heart, how easy would it be to leave this flesh and world, and to hear the sentence of my departure to my God? Death and the grave would be but a triumph for victorious love. It would be easier to die in peace and joy, than to rest at night, or to come home from my travel to my beloved friends, or to go, when I am hungry, to a feast. A little love hath made me study willingly, and preach willingly, and write willingly, yea, and suffer somewhat willingly; and would not more make me go more willingly to God? Shall the imagination of house, gardens, walks, libraries, prospects, meadows, orchards, hills, and rivers, allure the desires of deceived minds? And shall not the thoughts of the heavenly mansions, society, and delights, much more allure and draw up my desires? The reading of a known fiction of a *Civitas Solis*, an *Utopia*, an *Atalantis*, &c., hath pleased many; but if I did believingly hear of such a country in the world, where men did never die, nor were sick, or weak, or sad; where the prince was perfectly just and pious, wise and

peaceable, devoted to God and the public good; and the teachers were all wise, judicious men, of universal certain knowledge, perfectly acquainted with the matter and method of natural and theological truths, and all their duty, and all of one mind and of one heart, and tongue and practice, loving each other, and the people as themselves, and leading the flocks heavenward, through all temptations, with triumphant hopes and joy; where all the people perfectly obeyed God, their commanders, and their teachers, and lived in perfect love, unity, and peace, and were daily employed in the joyful praises of God, and hopes of glory, and in doing all possible good to one another, contending with none through ignorance, uncharitableness, or pride, nor ever reproaching, injuring, or hurting one another, &c. I say, if I knew or heard of such a country, should I not love it before I ever see it, and earnestly desire to be there? Nay, do I not over-love this distracted world, where tyranny sheddeth streams of blood, and layeth desolate cities and countries, and exposeth the miserable inhabitants to lamentable distress and famine; where the same tyranny sets up the wicked, reproacheth and oppresseth the just and innocent, keepeth out the gospel, and keepeth up idolatry, infidelity, and wickedness, in the far greatest part of all the earth; where Satan chooseth pastors too often for the churches of Christ, even such as by ignorance, pride, sensuality, worldliness, and malignity, become thorns and thistles, yea, devouring wolves, to those whom they should feed and comfort; where no two persons are in all things of a mind; where evil is commended, and truth and goodness accused and oppressed, because men's minds are unacquainted with them, or unsuitable to them. And those that are the greatest pretenders to truth do most eagerly contend against it, and oppose it; and almost all the world are scolding or scuffling in the dark; and where there appeareth but little hopes of a remedy, I say, can I love such a world as this? And shall I not think more delightfully of the inheritance of the saints in light, and the uniting love and joyful praises of the church triumphant, and the heavenly choir?

Should I not love a lovely and a loving world much better than a world where there is, comparatively, so little loveliness or love? All that is of God is good and lovely, but it is not here that his glory shineth in felicitating splendour. I am taught to look upward when I pray, and to say, "Our Father, which art in heaven." God's works are amiable, even in hell; and yet,

though I would know them, I would not be there. And, alas ! how much of the works of man are mixed here with the works of God ! Here is God's wisdom manifest ; but here is man's obstinate folly. Here is God's government ; but here is man's tyranny and unruliness. Here is God's love and mercies ; but here are men's malice, wrath, and cruelty ; by which they are worse to one another than wolves and tigers, depopulating countries, and filling the world with bloodshed, famine, misery, and lamentations, proud tyrants being worse than raging plagues ; which made David choose the pestilence before his enemies' pursuit. Here is much of God's beauteous order and harmony ; but here is also much of man's madness, deformity, and confusion. Here is much historical truth, and some civil and ecclesiastic justice ; but, alas ! with how much odious falsehood and injustice is it mixed ? Here is much precious theological verity ; but how dark is much of it to such blind, and negligent, and corrupted minds, as every where abound. Here are wise, judicious teachers and companions to be found ; but, alas ! how few, in comparison of the most ; and how hardly known by those that need them. Here are sound and orthodox ministers of Christ ; but how few that most need them know which are they, and how to value them or use them. And how many thousands of seduced or sensual sinners are made believe that they are but deceivers, or, as they called Paul, pestilent fellows, and movers of sedition among the people. And in how many parts of the world are they as the prophets that Obadiah hid in caves, or as Micaiah, or Elias among the lying prophets, or the Baalites. Though such as of whom the world is not worthy. And is that world, then, more worthy of our love than heaven ? There are worthy and religious families which honour God, and are honoured by him ; but, alas ! how few ; and usually by the temptations of wealth, and worldly interest, how full even of the sins of Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness, if not also unmercifulness to the poor. And how are they tempted to plead for their sins and snares, and account it rustic ignorance which contradicteth them. And how few pious families are there of the greater sort, that do not quickly degenerate ; and posterity, by false religion, error, or sensuality, grow most contrary to the minds of their pious progenitors. There are many that educate their children wisely in the fear of God, and have, accordingly, comfort in them ; but how many are there, that having devoted them in baptism to God, do train

them up in the service of the flesh, the world, and the devil, which they renounced, and never understood, or at least intended, for themselves or children, what they did profess. How many parents think, that when they offer their children to God in baptism, without a sober and due consideration of the nature and meaning of that great covenant with God, that God must accept, and certainly regenerate and save them. Yea, too many religious parents forget that they themselves are sponsors in that covenant, and undertake to use the means, on their part, to make their children fit for the grace of the Son, and the communion of the Spirit, as they grow up, and think that God should absolutely sanctify, keep, and save them at age, because they are theirs, and were baptised, though they keep them not from great and unnecessary temptations, nor teach them plainly and seriously the meaning of the covenant which was made for them with God, as to the nature, benefits, or conditions of it. How many send them to others to be taught in grammar, logic, philosophy, or arts, yea, and divinity, before their own parents ever taught them what they did with God in baptism, what they received, and what they promised and vowed to do. They send them to trades, or secular callings, or to travel in foreign lands, among a multitude of snares, among tempting company, and tempting baits, before ever at home they were instructed, armed, and settled against those temptations which they must needs encounter, and which, if they overcome them, they are undone. How ordinarily, when they have first neglected this great duty of their own for their fortification, do they plead a necessity of thrusting them out on these temptations, though utterly unarmed, from some punctilio of honour or conformity to the world, to avoid the contempt of worldly men, or to adorn their (yet naked) souls with some of the plumes or painted trifles, ceremonies, or compliments, which will never serve instead of heavenly wisdom, mortification, and the love of God and man. As if they were like to learn that fear of God in a crowd of diverting and tempting company, baits, and business, which they never learned under the teaching, nurture, and daily oversight, of their religious parents, in a safer station: or as if, for some little reason, they might send them as to sea without pilot or anchor, and think that God must save them from the waves: or as if it were better to enter them into Satan's school, or army, and venture them upon the notorious danger of damnation, than to miss of preferment and wealth, or of the fashions and favour

of the times : and then when they hear that they have forsaken God, and true religion, and given up themselves to lust and sensuality, and, perhaps, as enemies to God and good men, destroy what their parents laboured to build up, these parents wonder at God's judgments, and with broken hearts lament their infelicity, when it were better to lament their own misdoing, and it had been best of all to have lamented it.

Thus families, churches, and kingdoms, run on to blindness, ungodliness, and confusion : self-undoing, and serving the malice of Satan, for fleshly lust, is the too common employment of mankind : all is wise, and good, and sweet, which is prescribed us by God, in true nature, or supernatural revelation : but folly, sin, and misery, mistaking themselves to be wit, and honesty, and prosperity, and raging against that which nominally they pretend to and profess, are the ordinary case and course of the most of men : and when we would plead them out of their deceit and misery, it is well if we are not tempted to imitate them, or be not partly infected with their disease, or at least reproached and oppressed as their enemies : such a Bedlam is most of the world become, where madness goeth for the only wisdom, and he is the bravest man that can sin and be damned with reputation and renown, and successfully drive or draw the greatest number with him unto hell : to which the world hath no small likeness, forsaking God, and being very much forsaken by him.

This is the world which standeth in competition for my love, with the spiritual, blessed world : much of God's mercies and comforts I have here had : but their sweetness was their taste of divine love, and their tendency to heavenly perfection. What was the end and use of all the good that ever I saw, or that ever God did for my soul or body, but to teach me to love him, and long for more ? How many weaning experiences ; how many thousand bitter or contemning thoughts have I had of all the glory and pleasures of this world. How many thousand love tokens from God have called me to believe and taste his goodness. Wherever I go, and which way soever I look, I see vanity and vexation written upon all things in this world, so far as they stand in competition with God, and would be the end and portion of a fleshly mind : and I see holiness to the Lord written upon every thing, so far as it declareth God, and leadeth me to him, as my ultimate end. God hath not for nothing engaged me in a war against this world, and commanded me to take and

use it as mine enemy: the emptiness, dangerousness, and bitterness of the world, and the all-sufficiency, trustiness, and goodness of God, have been the sum of all the experiences of my life? And shall a worldly, backward heart overcome the teachings of nature, Scripture, the Spirit of grace, and all experience? Far be it from me!

But, O my God! love is thy great and special gift: all good is from thee: but love is the godlike nature, life, and image: it is given us from the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the quickening, illuminating, and sanctifying operation of the Holy Spirit: what can the earth return unto the sun, but its own reflected beams,—if those? As how far soever man is a medium in generation, nature, and that appetite which is the moving *pondus* in the child, is thy work; so, whatever is man's part in the mediate work of believing and repenting, (which yet is not done without thy Spirit and grace,) certainly it is the blessed Regenerator which must make us new creatures, by giving us this divine nature, holy love, which is the holy appetite and *pondus* of the soul. Come down, Lord, into this heart, for it cannot come up to thee. Can the plants for life, or the eye for light, go up unto the sun? Dwell in me by the Spirit of love, and I shall dwell by love in thee. Reason is weak, and thoughts are various, and man will be a slippery, uncertain wight, if love be not his fixing principle, and do not incline his soul to thee: surely through thy grace I easily feel that I love thy word, I love thy image, I love thy work, and, oh, how heartily do I love to love thee, and long to know and love thee more! And if all things be of thee, and through thee, and to thee, surely this love to the beams of thy glory here on earth is eminently so! It is thee, Lord, that it meaneth: to thee it looketh: it is thee it serveth: for thee it mourns, and seeks, and groans: in thee it trusts: and the hope, and peace, and comfort which support me, are in thee. When I was a returning prodigal in rags, thou sawest me afar off, and didst meet me with thy embracing, feasting love: and shall I doubt whether he that hath better clothed me, and dwelt within me, will entertain me with a feast of greater love in the heavenly mansions, the world of love?

The suitableness of things below to my fleshly nature, hath detained my affections too much on earth: and shall not the suitableness of things above to my spiritual nature much more draw up my love to heaven? There is the God whom I have

sought and served : he is also here ; but veiled, and but little known : but there he shineth to heavenly spirits in heavenly glory. There is the Saviour in whom I have believed : he hath also dwelt in flesh on earth ; but clothed in such meanness, and humbled to such a life and death, as was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Gentiles matter of reproach : but he shineth and reigneth now in glory, above the malice and contempt of sinners. And I shall there live because he liveth ; and in his light I shall have light. He loved me here with a redeeming, regenerating, and preserving love : but there he will love me with a perfecting, glorifying, joyful love. I had here some rays of heavenly light : but interpositions caused eclipses and nights, yea, some long and winter nights : but there I shall dwell in the city of the sun, the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, where there is no night, eclipse, or darkness : there are the heavenly hosts, whose holy love, and joyful praises, I would fain be a partaker of ? I have here had some of their loving assistance, but to me unseen, being above our fleshly way of converse ; but there I shall be with them, of the like nature, in the same orb, and of the same triumphant church and choir ! There are perfected souls gathered home to Christ : not, as here, striving, like Esau and Jacob in the womb ; nor yet as John when he leaped in the womb, because of his mother's joy ; nor as wrangling children, that are hardly kept in the same house in peace : not like the servants of Abraham and Lot, like Paul and Barnabas, like Epiphanius and Chrysostom, like Luther and Carolostadius, like Ridley and Hooper, or the many striving parties now among us ; nor like the disciples striving who should be the greatest : not like Noah's family in a wicked world, or Lot in a wicked city, or Abraham in an idolatrous land ; nor like Elijah left alone ; nor like those that wandered in sheep-skins and goat-skins, destitute, afflicted, and tormented, hid in dens and caves of the earth : not like Job on the dung-hill ; nor like Lazarus at the rich man's door : not like the African bishops, whose tongues were cut out ; nor like the preachers silenced by Popish imposers ; (in Germany by the interim, or elsewhere ;) nor like such as Tzegedine, Peucer, and many other worthy men, whose maturest age was spent in prisons : not as we poor bewildered sinners, feeling evil, and fearing more, confounded in folly and mad contention, some hating the only way of peace, and others groping for it in the dark, wandering and lost in the clearest light, where the illuminated can but pity the

blind, but cannot make them willing to be delivered. What is heaven to me, but God? God, who is life, and light, and love, communicating himself to blessed spirits, perfecting them in the reception, possession, and exercise of life, and light, and love, for ever. These are not the accidents, but the essence of that God who is heaven and all to me: should I fear that death which passeth me to infinite, essential life? Should I fear a darksome passage into a world of perfect light? Should I fear to go to love itself? Think, O my soul, what the sun's quickening light and heat is to this lower, corporeal world? Much more is God, even infinite life, and light, and love, to the blessed world above: doth it not draw out thy desires to think of going into a world of love? When love will be our region, our company, our life; more to us than the air is for our breath, than the light is for our sight, than our food is for our life, than our friends are for our solace; and more to us than we are to ourselves. O excellent grace of faith which doth foresee, and blessed word of faith that doth foreshow, this world of love! Shall I fear to enter where there is no wrath, no fear, no strangeness, nor suspicion, nor selfish separation, but love will make every holy spirit as dear and lovely to me as myself, and me to them as lovely as themselves, and God to us all more amiable than ourselves and all: where love will have no defects or distances, no damps or discouragements, no discontinuance or mixed disaffection; but as life will be without death, and light without darkness, (a perfect, everlasting day of glory,) so will love be without any hatred, unkindness, or allay. As many coals make one fire, and many candles conjoined make one light, so will many living spirits make one life, and many illuminated, glorious spirits, one light and glory, and many spirits, naturalized into love, will make one perfect love of God, and be loved as one by God for ever: for all the body of Christ is one; even here it is one in initial union of the Spirit, and relation to one God, and Head, and Life, (1 Cor. xii. throughout; Eph. iv. 1—17,) and shall be presented as beloved and spotless to God, when the great marriage day of the Lamb shall come. (Eph. v. 24, 25, &c.; Rev. xxi and xxii.)

Hadst thou not given me, O Lord, the life of nature, I should have had no conceptions of a glorious, everlasting life: but if thou give me not the life of grace, I shall have no sufficient delightful inclination and desire after it. Hadst thou not given me sight and reason, the light of nature, I should not have

thought how desirable it is to live in the glorious light and vision; but if thou give me not the spiritual illumination of a seeing faith, I shall not yet long for the glorious light, and beatific vision. Hadst thou not given me a will and love, which is part of my very nature itself, I could not have tasted how desirable it is to live in a world of universal, perfect, endless love: but unless thou also shed abroad thy love upon my heart, by the Spirit of Jesus, the great medium of love, and turn my very nature or inclination into divine and holy love, I shall not long for the world of love. Appetite followeth nature: oh! give me not only the image and the art of godliness; the approaches towards it, nor only some forced or unconstant acts; but give me the divine nature, which is holy love, and then my soul will hasten towards thee, and cry, 'How long, O Lord, how long! O come, come quickly, make no delay.' Surely the fear of dying intimateth some contrary love that inclineth the soul another way; and some shameful unbelief, and great unapprehensiveness of the attractive glory of the world of love: otherwise no frozen person so longeth for the fire, none in a dungeon so desireth light, as we should long for the heavenly light and love.

God's infinite, essential self-love, in which he is eternally delighted in himself, is the most amiable object, and heaven itself to saints and angels: and next to that his love to all his works, to the world, and to the church in heaven, speaketh much more of his loveliness than his love to me. But yet due self-love in me, is his work, and part of his natural image; and when this by sin is grown up to excess, (through the withdrawing of a contracted, narrow soul, from the union and due love to my fellow-creatures, and to God,) I must also, I cannot but, inquire after God's love to me: and by this my desires must be moved; for I am not so capable of ascending above self-interest, and self-love, as in the state of glorious union I shall be. I am glad to perceive that others do love God; and I love those most that I find most love him: but it is not other men's love to God that will be accepted by him instead of mine: nor is it God's love to others (which yet rejoiceth me) that will satisfy me, without his love to me. But when all these are still before me, God's essential self-love and delight, his love to his creatures, especially the glorified, and his love to me also, even to me, a vile, unworthy sinner; what then should stay my ascending love, or discourage my desires to be with God?

And dost thou doubt, canst thou doubt, O my soul, whether thou art going to a God that loveth thee? If the Jews discerned the great love of Christ to Lazarus by his tears, canst thou not discern his love to thee in his blood? It is never the less, but the more, obliging and amiable that it was not shed for thee alone, but for many. May I not say as Paul, (Gal. ii. 20,) "I live by the faith of the Son of God, that hath loved me, and given himself for me." Yea, it is not so much I that live, as Christ liveth in me: and will he forsake the habitation which his love hath chosen; and which he hath so dearly bought? Oh, read often that triumphing chapter Rom. viii., and conclude, "What shall separate us from the love of God?" If life have not done it, death shall not do it. If leaning on his breast at meat was a token of Christ's special love to John, is not his dwelling in me by my faith, and his living in me by his Spirit, a sure token of his love to me: and if a dark saying, "If he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" raised a report that the beloved disciple should not die, why should not plain promises assure me that I shall live with him that loveth me for ever? Be not so unthankful, O my soul, as to question, doubtfully, whether thy heavenly Father, and thy Lord, doth love thee? Canst thou forget the sealed testimonies of it? Did I not even now repeat so many as should shame my doubts? A multitude of thy friends have loved thee so entirely, that thou canst not doubt of it: and did any of them signify their love with the convincing evidence that God hath done? Have they done for thee what he hath done? Are they love itself? Is their love so full, so firm, and so unchangeable, as his? My thoughts of heaven are the sweeter, because abundance of my ancient, lovely, and loving holy friends are there: and I am the willinger, by death, to follow them. And should I not think of it more pleasedly because my God and Father, my Saviour, and my Comforter, is there? And not alone, but with all the society of love. Was not Lazarus in the bosom of God himself? Yet it is said that he was in Abraham's bosom; as the promise runs, that we shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God. And what maketh the society of the saints so sweet as holy love? It is comfortable to read, that "To love the Lord our God with all our heart, and soul, and might," is the first and great commandment; and the second is like to it, "to love our neighbours as ourselves." For God's commands proceed from that will which is his nature, or essence, and they

tend to the same as their objective end. Therefore, he that hath made love the great command, doth tell us that love is the great conception of his own essence, the spring of that command; and that this commanded, imperfect love doth tend to perfect, heavenly love, even to our communion with essential, infinite love. It were strange, that the love and goodness which is equal to the power that made the world, and the wisdom that ordereth it, should be scant and backward to do good, and to be suspected more than the love of friends! The remembrance of the holiness, humility, love, and faithfulness, of my dearest friends of every rank, with whom I have conversed on earth, in every place where I have lived, is so sweet to me, that I am oft ready to recreate myself with the naming of such as are now with Christ. But in heaven they will love me better than they did on earth; and my love to them will be more pleasant. But all these sparks are little to the sun.

Every place that I have lived in was a place of divine love, which there set up its obliging monuments. Every year and hour of my life hath been a time of love; every friend, and every neighbour, yea, every enemy, have been the messengers and instruments of love; every state and change of my life, notwithstanding my sin, hath opened to me treasures and mysteries of love. And after such a life of love, shall I doubt whether the same God do love me? Is he the God of the mountains, and not of the vallies? Did he love me in my youth and health, and doth he not love me in my age, and pain, and sickness? Did he love all the faithful better in their life than at their death? If our hope be not chiefly in this life, neither is our state of love, which is principally the heavenly, endless grace. My groans grieve my friends, but abate not their love. Did he love me for my strength, my weakness might be my fear; as they that love for beauty loathe them that are deformed, and they that love for riches despise the poor. But God loved me when I was his enemy, to make me a friend, and when I was bad, to make me better. Whatever he taketh pleasure in is his own gift. Who made me to differ? And what have I that I have not received? And God will finish the work, the building, the warfare, that is his own. Oh, the multitude of mercies to my soul and body, in peace and war, in youth and age, to myself and friends, the many great and gracious deliverances which have testified to me the love of God! Have I lived in the experience of it, and shall I die in

the doubts of it? Had it been love only to my body, it would have died with me, and not have accompanied my departing soul. I am not much in doubt of the truth of my love to him; though I have not seen him, save as in a glass, as in a glass seen I love him. I love my brethren whom I have seen, and those most that are most in love with him. I love his word, and works, and ways, and fain I would be nearer to him, and love him more; and I loathe myself for loving him no better. And shall Peter say more confidently, "Thou knowest that I love thee," than "I know that thou lovest me?" Yes, he may; because, though God's love is greater and steadfaster than ours, yet our knowledge of his great love is less than his knowledge of our little love; and as we are defective in our own love, so are we in our certainty of its sincerity. And without the knowledge of our love to God, we can never be sure of his special love to us. But yet I am not utterly a stranger to myself; I know for what I have lived and laboured in the world, and who it is that I have desired to please. The God whose I am, and whom I serve, hath loved me in my youth, and he will love me in my aged weakness. My flesh and my heart fail; my pains seem grievous to the flesh; but it is love that chooseth them, that useth them for my good, that moderateth them, and will shortly end them. Why then should I doubt of my Father's love? Shall pain or dying make me doubt? Did God love none from the beginning of the world, but Enoch and Elias? And what am I better than my forefathers? What is in me that I should expect exemption from the common lot of mankind? Is not a competent time of great mercy on earth, in order to the unseen felicity, all that the best of men can hope for? O for a clearer, stronger faith, to show me the world that more excelleth this, than this excelleth the womb where I was conceived! Then should I not fear my third birthday, what pangs soever go before it; nor be unwilling of my change. The grave, indeed, is a bed that nature doth abhor, yet there the weary be at rest. But souls new born have a double nature that is immortal, and go to the place that is agreeable to their nature, even to the region of spirits, and the region of holy love. Even passive matter, that hath no other natural motion, hath a natural inclination to uniting, aggregative motion. And God maketh all natures suitable to their proper ends and use. How can it be that a spirit should not incline to be with spirits? and souls,

that have the divine nature in holy love, desire to be with the God of love? Arts, and sciences, and tongues, become not a nature to us; else they would not cease at death. But holy love is our new nature, and therefore ceaseth not with this bodily life. And shall accidental love make me desire the company of a frail and mutable friend? And shall not this engrafted, inseparable love, make me long to be with Christ? Though the love of God to all his creatures will not prove that they are all immortal, nor oblige them to expect another life, that never had capacity or faculties to expect it, yet his love to such as in nature and grace are made capable of it, doth warrant and oblige them to believe and hope for the full perfection of the work of love. Some comfort themselves in the love of St. Peter, as having the keys of heaven. And how many could I name that are now with Christ, who loved me so faithfully on earth, that were I sure they had the keys and power of heaven, and were not changed in their love, I could put my departing soul into their hands, and die with joy. And is it not better in the hand of my Redeemer, and the God of love, and Father of spirits? Is any love comparable to his; or any friend so boldly to be trusted? I should take it for ungrateful unkindness in my friend to doubt of my love and trustiness, if I had given him all that he hath, and maintained him constantly by my kindness; but oh, how odious a thing is sin! which, by destroying our love to God, doth make us unmeet to believe and sweetly perceive his love; and by making us doubt of the love of God, and lose the pleasant relish of it, doth more increase our difficulty of loving him. The title that the angel gave to Daniel, "A man greatly beloved of God," methinks, should be enough to make one joyfully love and trust God, both in life and death. Will Almighty love ever hurt me or forsake me? And have not all saints that title in their degrees? What else signifieth their mark and name, Holiness to the Lord? What is it but our separation to God, as his peculiar, beloved people? And how are they separated but by mutual love, and our forsaking all that alienateth, or is contrary? Let scorners deride us as self-flatterers, that believe they are God's darlings; and wo to the hypocrites that believe it on their false presumption! Without such belief or grounded hopes I see not how any man can die in true peace. He that is no otherwise beloved than hypocrites and unbelievers, must have his portion with them. And he that is no otherwise beloved than as the

ungodly, unholy, and unregenerate, shall not stand in judgment, nor see God, nor enter into his kingdom. Most upright souls are to blame for groundless doubting of God's love; but not for acknowledging it, rejoicing in it, and, in their doubts, being most solicitous to make it sure. Love brought me into the world, and furnished me with a thousand mercies. Love hath provided for me, delivered me, and preserved me, till now; and will it not entertain my separated soul? Is God like false or insufficient friends, that forsake us in adversity?

I confess that I have wronged love by sin; by many and great unexcusable sins. But all, save Christ himself, were sinners, which love did purify, and receive to glory. God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by grace we are saved, and hath raised us up together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Eph. ii. 4—6.) O that I could love much that have so much forgiven! The glorified praise him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests to God. (Rev. i. 5, 6.) Our Father that hath loved us, giveth us consolation and good hope, through grace. (2 Thess. ii. 16.) I know no sin which I repent not of with self-loathing; and I earnestly beg and labour that none of my sins may be to me unknown. I dare not justify even what is in any way uncertain; though I dare not call all that my sin which siding men, of different judgments, on each side, passionately call so. While both sides do it on contrary accounts, and not to go contrary ways is a crime. O that God would bless my accusations to my illumination, that I may not be unknown to myself! Though some think me much better than I am, and others much worse, it most concerneth me to know the truth myself; flattery would be more dangerous to me than false accusations: I may safelier be ignorant of other men's sins than of my own. Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me, Lord, from secret sins, and let not ignorance or error keep me in impenitence; and keep thou me back from presumptuous sins. (Psalm xix. 12, 13.) I have an advocate with the Father, and thy promise, that he that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy. Those are, by some men, taken for my greatest sins, which my most serious thoughts did judge to be the greatest of my outward duties, and which I performed through the greatest difficulties, and which cost me dearest to the flesh, and the greatest self-

denial and patience in my reluctant mind. Wherever I have erred, Lord, make it known to me, that my confession may prevent the sin of others; and where I have not erred, confirm and accept me in the right.

And seeing an unworthy worm hath had so many testimonies of thy tender love, let me not be like to them, that when thou saidst, 'I loved you,' unthankfully asked, 'Wherein hast thou loved us?' (Mal. i. 2.) Heaven is not more spangled with stars, than thy word and works with the refulgent signatures of love. Thy well-beloved Son, the Son of thy love, undertaking the office, message, and work of the greatest love, was full of that Spirit which is love, which he sheds abroad in the hearts of thine elect, that the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the communion of the Spirit, may be their hope and life. His works, his sufferings, his gifts, as well as his comfortable word, did say to his disciples, "As the Father loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love." (John xv. 9.) And how, Lord, shall we continue in it, but by the thankful belief of thy love and loveliness, desiring still to love thee more, and in all things to know and please thy will; which thou knowest is my soul's desire.

Behold then, O my soul, with what love the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have loved thee, that thou shouldest be made and called a son of God, redeemed, regenerate, adopted into that covenant state of grace in which thou standest. "Rejoice, therefore, in hope of the glory of God, being justified by faith, having peace with God, and access by faith and hope that maketh not ashamed; that being reconciled, when an enemy, by the death of Christ, I shall be saved by his life. (Rom. v. 1, 2.) Having loved his own, to the end he loveth them, and without end. His gifts and calling are without repentance. When Satan, and thy flesh, would hide God's love, look to Christ, and read the golden words of love in the sacred gospel; and peruse thy many recorded experiences, and remember the convictions which secret and open mercies have many a time afforded thee. But especially draw nearer to the Lord of love, and be not seldom and slight in thy contemplations of his love and loveliness; dwell in the sunshine, and thou wilt know that it is light, and warm, and comfortable. Distance and strangeness cherish thy doubts; acquaint thyself with him, and be at peace.

Yet look up, and oft and earnestly look up, after thy ascended,

glorified Head, who said, "Tell my brethren I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." Think where and what he is, and what he is now doing for all his own; and how humbled, abased, suffering love is now triumphant, regnant, glorified love; and therefore no less than in all its tender expressions upon earth. As love is nowhere perfectly believed but in heaven, so I can nowhere so fully discern it, as by looking up by faith to my Father and Saviour, which is in heaven, and conversing more believingly with the heavenly society. Had I done this more and better, and as I have persuaded others to do it, I had lived in more convincing delights of God's love, which would have turned the fears of death into more joyful hopes, and more earnest desires to be with Christ, in the arms, in the world, in the life of love, as far better than to be here, in a dark, a doubting, fearing world.

But O Father of infinite love! though my arguments be many and strong, my heart is bad, and my strength is weakness, and I am insufficient to plead the cause of thy love and loveliness to myself or others. Oh, plead thy own cause, and what heart can resist? Let it not be my word only, but thine, that thou lovest me, even me, a sinner; speak it as Christ said to Lazarus, "Arise." If not, as thou tellest me that the sun is warm, yet as thou hast told me that my parents and my dearest friends did love me, and much more powerfully than so. Tell it me, as thou tellest me that thou hast given me life, by the consciousness and works of life; that while I can say, "Thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee;" it may include, 'therefore I know that I am beloved of thee;' and therefore come to thee in the confidence of thy love, and long to be nearer in the clearer sight, the fuller sense, and joyfuller exercise of love for ever. Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! Amen.

AN
APPENDIX.

A BRIEVIATE OF THE HELPS OF FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE.

A BRIEVIATE OF THE PROOF OF SUPERNATURAL REVELATION,
AND THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

I TIMOTHY iii. 16.

Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

THESE are the creed, or six articles of the gospel which the apostles preached.

Sect. 1. God manifested in the flesh of Jesus, is the first and great article. Believe this, and believe all. No wonder that believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is so often made, in Scripture, the description of saving faith, the title to baptism, and pardon, and salvation, the evidence of the Spirit, &c. He that truly and practically believeth that God came in flesh to man, and that Christ is the Father's messenger from heaven, must needs believe that God hath a great value for the souls of men, and for his church, that he despiseth not even our flesh; that his word is true, and fully to be trusted; that he, who so wonderfully came to man, will certainly take up man to him. Who can doubt of the immortality of souls, or that Christ will receive the departing souls of the faithful to himself, who believeth that he took man's nature, and hath glorified it now in heaven, in union with the divine? Who can ever have low thoughts of God's love and mercy who believeth this? and who can prostitute his soul and flesh to wickedness, who firmly believeth that he took the soul and flesh of man to sanctify and glorify it?

Sect. 2. II. The Holy Spirit is the justification of the truth of Jesus Christ. He is Christ's advocate and witness to the

world. He proveth the gospel by these five ways of evidence: 1. By all the prophecies, types, and promises of Christ in the Old Testament, before Christ's coming. 2. By the inherent impress of God's image on the person and doctrine of Christ; which, *propria luce*, showeth itself to be divine. 3. By the concomitant miracles of Christ: read the history of the gospel for this use, and observe each history. 4. By the subsequent gift of the Spirit to the apostles and other Christians, by languages, wonders, and multitudes of miracles, to convince the world. 5. By the undeniable and excellent work of sanctification on all true believers through all the world, in all generations to this day. These five are the Spirit's witness, which fully testifieth the certain truth, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Sect. 3. Quest. But how are we sure, who, ourselves, never saw the person, miracles, resurrection, ascension of Christ, that the history of them is true?

Answ. 1. We may be sure that the spectators were not deceived. 2. And that they did not deceive them to whom they reported it. 3. And that we are not deceived by any miscarriage in the historical tradition to us.

Sect. 4. I. It was not possible that men that were not mad, that had eyes and ears, could, for three years and a half, believe that they saw the lame, the blind, the deaf, and all diseases healed, the dead raised, thousands miraculously fed, &c., and this among crowds of people that still followed Christ, if the things had not been true. One man's senses may be deceived at some one instance, by some deceitful accident: but that the eyes and ears of multitudes should be so oft deceived, many years, in the open light, is as much as to say, no man knoweth any thing that he seeth and heareth.

Sect. 5. II. That the disciples who received the apostles' and evangelists' report of Christ, were not deceived by the reporters, is most evident.

For, 1. They received it not by hearsay, at the second hand, but from the eye and ear witnesses themselves, who must needs know what they said.

2. They heard this report from men of the same time, and age, and country, where it was easy to examine the case, and confute it, had it been false.

3. The apostles appealed to crowds and thousands of witnesses, as to many of Christ's miracles, who would have made it odious, had it not been true.

4. They sharply reproved the rulers for persecuting Christ, which would provoke them to do their best to confute the apostles for their own justification.

5. Christ chose men of no great human learning and subtlety, but common, plain, unlearned men, that it might not be thought a deceit of art.

6. Yea, he did not make much more known to them before his death, than the bare matters of fact which they daily saw, and that he was the Christ, and Moral Doctrine; his death, resurrection, ascension, and kingdom of heaven, they knew little of before; but experience, and the sudden coming down of the Spirit, suddenly taught them all the rest.

7. They taught not one another, but were every one personally taught of God.

8. And yet they all agreed in the same doctrine when they were dispersed over the world, and never differed in any one article of faith.

9. They were men that had no worldly interest, wealth, or dominion, to seek.

10. Yea, they renounced and denied all worldly interest, and sealed their testimony by their sufferings and blood; and all in hope of a heavenly reward, which they knew that lying was no means to obtain.

11. Had they plotted to cheat the world for nothing, the sin is so heinous that some one of them would have repented and confessed it, at least, at death; which none of them did, but died joyfully, as for the truth.

12. Paul was converted by a voice and light from heaven, in the presence of those that travelled with him in his persecuting design.

13. But yet it is a fuller evidence that the doctrine which they delivered, as from God, beareth a divine impress, that, as the light, it is its own evidence.

14. And for the more infallible conviction, they that testified of Christ's miracles, did the like themselves to confirm their testimony. They spake with tongues which they never learned; they healed all diseases; even the shadow of Peter, and the clothes that came from Paul, did heal men; they raised the dead; and they that in all countries converted the nations by their own miracles, attesting the miracles and resurrection of Christ, must needs compel the spectators to believe them.

15. Yet, more than all this, those that believed them were

presently enabled to do the like in one kind and degree or other. The same extraordinary gift of the Spirit fell upon the common multitude of believers, by the laying on of the apostles' hands; so that Simon Magus would fain have bought that power with money. And when men witnessed Christ's miracles, and wrought the like themselves; and those that believed them had and did the like, either healing, tongues, prophecy, or some wonder, it was, sure, an infallible way of testifying.

16. When wrangling heretics quarrelled with the apostles, and would draw away disciples to themselves, by disparaging them, they still appealed to the miracles wrought by these disciples themselves, or in their sight; as Gal. iii. 1, 2, 3, 5. And as Christ, when the Jews said he did all by Beelzebub, when he cast out devils, asked them, "By whom do your children cast them out?" Which, had it been false, would have turned all the people from them.

17. Their adversaries were so far from writing any confutation of their testimony, that they confessed the miracles, and had no shift, but either to blaspheme the Holy Ghost, and say that they were done by the devil, or else, by persecution and violence, to oppress them. As if the devil were master of the world, and could remedilessly deceive it against God's will; or God himself would send or suffer a full course of miracles remedilessly to deceive the world, which is to make God like the devil: or, as if the devil were so good, as by miracles to promote so holy, and amiable, and just a doctrine, as that of Christianity, to make men wise, and, good, and just, and kill their sin. So that this blasphemy of the Holy Ghost makes Satan to be God, or God to be Satan.

18. All the cruelty, powers, learning, and policy of their adversaries was not able to stop the progress of this testimony, much less to prevail against it.

III. It is then most certain, that the first witnesses were not deceived by Christ, nor believers after deceived by them. The next question is, whether we be not deceived by a false historical tradition of these things? Had we seen them all ourselves, we must needs have believed; but at this distance we know not what misreports may intervene. What eyesight and hearing was to them, that tradition is to us. Now the question is, is it certainly the very same fact and doctrine which they received, and which we receive?

And here, let it be premised, that there is no other way of

assurance, than that which God hath afforded us, that the reason of man could have desired.

1. If we would see God, and heaven, and hell, this is not a way suitable to the state of probationers that live in flesh on earth. Angels live by vision, and fruition of glory; and brutes, by sense, on sensible things; but reasonable travellers must live by reason, and by believing certain revelation.

2. If God will send his Son from heaven to ascertain us, and we will believe no more than we see ourselves, then Christ must dwell on earth, to the end of the world, and he must be in all places of the earth at once, that all may see; and he must die and rise again before all men in all ages; and how mad an expectation is this!

3. Or if all that deliver us the history must work miracles before our eyes, or else we will not believe them, it is still most absurd. Will you not believe that the laws of the land are genuine, or that ever there were such kings as made them, unless he that tells it you work miracles? Shall not children believe their parents, or scholars their tutors, unless they work miracles?

3. I must premise that there are three sorts of tradition, I. Such as depends on the common wit and honesty of mankind. And this is very much to be suspected, wickedness, folly, and lying being grown so common in the world.

II. Such as depends on the extraordinary skill and honesty of some proved men. And this deserveth much belief; but it is an uncertain human faith.

III. Such as depends on natural necessity, and cannot possibly be false. We have both these last to ascertain us of the gospel history.

This resteth on a distinction of the acts of man's will: some of them are mutably free; and these give no certainty: some of them are naturally and immutably necessary, and man can do no otherwise; and these give even natural, infallible certainty. Such are to love one's self, to love felicity, to hate torment and misery, &c., and to know that which is fully manifest to our sound senses, &c.

When men of contrary interests and temper all confess the truth of known things, about which their interests stand cross, it is a physical evidence of truth.

On this account, men's agreement about natural notices is infallible.

It seems strange that all the world, from Adam's time, are agreed which is the first, second, and third, &c., day of the week, and not a day lost till now. It could be no otherwise, because, being a thing of natural interest and notice, if any kingdom had lost a day by oversleeping, or had agreed to falsify it, all the rest of the world would have shamed them.

Thus all Grecians, Latins, Englishmen, &c., agree about the sense of words; for if some would pervert them, the rest would detect it.

Thus we are certain that the statutes of the land are not counterfeit. For men of cross interests hold their lands and lives by them: and if some did counterfeit them, the rest would, by interest, be bound to detect it.

Arg. 1. There can be no effect without an adequate cause; but in nature there is no cause that can make all men agree to assert a known falsehood, or deny a known truth, against all their known interest; therefore there can be no such effect.

Arg. 2. A necessary cause will necessarily effect; but where men's known interest obligeth them to agree of a known truth, this is a necessary cause of certain credibility; therefore it hath a necessary effect.

You know who were your parents, and when and where you were born, &c., by such tradition in a lower degree. This dependeth not on pretended authority, nor on mere honesty; but on natural necessity.

Having premised this, I come to prove, that we have such tradition of physical, infallible evidence, that the faith of the present church, in the essentials, is the same which the first churches received infallibly from the apostles.

1. The world knoweth, that ever since Christ's ascension, all that believed in him were baptised, as all Abraham's covenanting seed were circumcised. And what is baptism, but a profession of belief in Jesus Christ, as dead, risen, and glorified; and a devoting ourselves in covenant to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? All that ever were Christians by solemn vow professed this same faith; and this is such a tradition of Christianity as human generations, down from Adam, are of the same humanity in the world.

2. They that were baptised were catechised first; in which the three articles of baptism were opened to them; of which Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension were part; and this hath been an undeniable tradition of the same faith.

3. The sum of the christian faith was, from the beginning, drawn up in certain articles called the creed, which expounded the three baptismal articles ; and all churches on earth had the same in sense, and most in words ; and all at age that were baptised, professed this creed ; which is as full a tradition of the same belief in Christ's birth, death, and resurrection, ascension, and glory, as speaking is a tradition of the same human nature.

4. Before Christ's ascension, he instituted the office of the sacred ministry, which friends and foes confess hath continued ever since. And what is this ministry, but an office of publishing the gospel of Christ, his life, death, miracles, resurrection, grace, &c. What else have they done in all ages in the world ? so that the office is an undeniable tradition.

5. Christ and his apostles instituted the weekly celebration of the remembrance of his resurrection on the Lord's days : friends and foes confess the history, that the first day of the week hath been kept for such memorial ever since, through all the Christian part of the world, which proveth the uninterrupted belief of Christ's resurrection, as a notorious, practical tradition.

6. Christ and his apostles, ever since his resurrection, instituted solemn assemblies of Christians to be held on those days, and at other times ; once a week was the least through the Christian world : and what did they meet for, but to preach, hear, and profess the same christian faith ?

7. It was the constant custom of Christians in their assemblies, and their houses, to sing hymns of praise to Jesus Christ, in remembrance of his resurrection, &c. Pliny tells Trajan that this was the practice by which Christians were known by their persecutors : which is a practical tradition.

8. Jesus Christ instituted, and all Christians to this day have constantly used, the sacrament of Christ's sacrifice, called the eucharist ; to keep in remembrance his death till he come, and profess their belief that he is our life. And as the constant celebration of the passover, with all its ceremonies, was a most certain tradition of the Egyptians' plagues, and Israelites' deliverance, more than a bare written history would be, so hath the Lord's supper been, of the uninterrupted belief of the history of our redemption by Christ.

9. The church hath, from the beginning, had a constant discipline, by which it hath kept itself separate from heretics,

who have denied any essential article of this faith, which is a sure tradition of the same belief.

10. None question but Christians have, from the beginning, been persecuted for this same faith, and in persecution made confession of it: persecutors and confessors, then, are both the witnesses of the continuance.

11. Whenever heretics or enemies have written against Christians, their apologies and defences show that it was this same faith which they owned.

12. Most of the adverse heretics owned the same matters of fact.

13. The Jews were long before in possession of the books of the Old Testament, which bear their testimony to Christ.

14. The books of the New Testament have, by certain tradition, been delivered down to this present day, which contain the matters of fact and doctrine, the essentials, integrals, and accidents of the faith.

15. No enemies have written any thing against the matter of fact, of any moment.

16. Yea, the Jews, and other bitterest enemies, confess much of the miracles of Christ.

17. Martyrs have cheerfully forsaken life and all in confessing it.

18. God, by his wonderful providence, hath maintained it.

19. The devil, and all the wicked of the world, are the greatest enemies to it.

20. The Holy Ghost hath still blessed it, to work the same holy and heavenly nature and life, in all sincere and serious believers.

Quest. This proveth infallibly the tradition of the same faith in the essentials: but how prove you that the same holy Scripture is delivered as uncorrupted?

Answ. All the Bible is not brought down so unchanged as are the essentials of our religion: when there were no Bibles but what scribes wrote, no wonder if oversight left few copies without some of their slips. There are hundreds of various readings in the New Testament, and of many no man can be certain which is true: but none of them are such as make any difference in the articles of our faith or practice, nor on which any point of doctrine or fact dependeth.

And the words are necessary but for the matter which they do record.

And 1. All ministers, and all churches, constantly used this same Scripture publicly and privately, as the word of God, so that it could not be easily altered.

2. They all knew that a curse is pronounced against every one that addeth or diminisheth ; which must needs possess them with fear of corrupting it.

3. They took it to be the charter of their own salvation.

4. The work of the ministers was to expound it, and preserve it against corrupters.

5. These ministers and churches were over much of the world, and could not agree together to corrupt it ; and if some did it, all the rest would soon detect it.

6. Heresies and quarrels were quickly to rise among them ; so that cross interests and animosities would soon have fallen upon the corrupters.

7. Some heretics made some adding and corrupting attempts, which the church presently condemned, and turned it to their shame.

8. In all the disputations then managed, the same Scriptures were appealed to.

9. The translations into various languages show that the books were the same, without any momentous difference.

10. To this day, when sin and tyranny have torn the church into many factions, they all receive the same canonical Scriptures, except that some receive more apocryphal writings, which yet make no alteration at all of our gospel faith.

Quest. But doth not this laying so much on tradition favour popery ?

Ans. No : The difference is here. 1. Papists are for tradition, as a supplement to the Scripture, as if this were but part of the word of God : and, 2. They plead for a peculiar power of being the keepers and judges of that supplemental tradition, which other churches know nothing of.

But we, 1. Plead for the infallible, practical tradition of the essentials of Christianity by itself, and in the creed, &c., which is less than the Scripture. 2. And next for the certain tradition of the Scripture itself, uncorrupted in all that faith depends on : which Scripture is the complete record of God's will and law, containing more than essentials and integrals.

So much of God, 1. Manifested in the flesh ; 2. Justified in the Spirit.

III. He was seen of angels ; that is, angels were the behold-

ing, witnessing, and admiring servants of this great mystery, God manifested in the flesh.

1. Angels preached Christ at his incarnation.
2. Angels ministered to Christ in his temptations, agonies, &c.
3. Angels were preachers and witnesses of his resurrection.
4. Angels rolled away the stone, and terrified the soldiers.
5. Angels preached his return to them that gazed up at his ascension.
6. Angels opened the prison-doors, and set the imprisoned apostles free once, and Peter alone, afterwards.
7. Angels rejoice in heaven at the conversion of all that Christ brings home.
8. Angels disdain not to be the guardians of the least of Christ's disciples.
9. Angels are protecting officers over churches and kingdoms.
10. Angels have preached to apostles, and been the messengers of their revelations.
11. Angels have been the instruments of miracles, and of destroying the church's enemies.
12. Angels will ministerially convoy departed souls to Christ.
13. Angels will gloriously attend Christ at his return, and sever the wicked from the just.
14. Angels will be our companions in the heavenly choir for ever.

Therefore, 1. We should love angels. 2. And be thankful to God for them. 3. And think the more comfortably of heaven for their society. 4. And pray for the benefit of their ministry on earth, especially in all our dangers.

IV. The fourth article is "Preached to the Gentiles." The Jews having the covenant of peculiarity, were proud of their privilege, even while they unworthily abused it; and despised the rest of the world, and would not so much as eat with them, as if they had been God's only people. And, indeed, the rest of the world was so corrupted, that we find no one nation that, as such, renounced idolatry, and was devoted in covenant to the true God alone, as the Jews were. Now that God should be manifested in flesh, to reconcile the heathen world to himself, and extend greater privileges, indefinitely to all nations, than ever the Jews had in their state of peculiarity, this was a mystery of godliness, which the Jews did hardly yield belief to.

And that which aggravateth this wonder is, 1. That the Gentile world was drowned in all idolatry and unnatural wicked-

ness, such as Paul describeth. And that God should suddenly and freely send them the message of reconciliation, and be found of them that sought him not, is that wonder which obligeth us Gentiles, who once lived as without God in the world, to be thankful to him. (Rom. i. 2; Eph. ii., and iii. 18, &c.)

V. The fifth article is "Believed on in the world." The effect of the gospel on the souls of men in their effectual faith, is one of the evidences of the christian truth.

I told you before, that the fifth witness of the Spirit on the souls of all believers, I reserved to be here mentioned. Here, 1. It is a part of the wonder, that Christ should be believed on in the world, even with a common faith. For, 1. To believe a mean man to be the Mediator between God and man, and the Saviour of the world; yea, one that was crucified as a malefactor; this must needs be a difficult thing.

2. The very Jewish nation was as contemptible to the Romans, being one of their poorest subdued provinces, as the Gentiles were to the Jews: and Christ was by birth a Jew.

3. The greatness of the Roman empire then, ruling over much of the world, was such, that by preaching, and not by war, to bring them to be subjects to a crucified Jew, was a marvellous work; and so to bring the conquered nations to become Christ's voluntary subjects.

4. The Roman and Greek learning was then at the height of its perfection: and the Christians were despised by them as unlearned barbarians: and that learning, arts, and empire should all submit to such a King and Saviour, was certainly a work of supernatural power. Christ did not levy armies to overcome the nations, nor did victory move them; but the victors and lords of the world, and these no fools, but the masters of the greatest human wisdom, were conquered by the gospel, preached by a sort of inferior men.

5. And this gospel which conquered them was still opposed by them, and the Christians persecuted as a sort of hated men, till it overcame the persecutors.

It is true that heathenism hath the greatest part of the world, and Mahometans have as much as Christians: but one sort got it by the sword, and the other by the doctrine and holy lives of a few unarmed, inferior men.

II. But I use this of the extent of faith, but as a probable, and not a cogent argument: but the main argument is from the sanctifying effect of faith.

I know it will be said, that many, or most, Christians are as bad as other men.

But it is one thing to be of a professed religion, because it is the religion of the king and country, and therefore maketh for men's worldly advantage, and they hear little said against it : this is the case of most in the world, Christians, Mahometans, and heathens : and it is another to be a serious believer, who, upon trial and consideration, chooseth Christianity.

And it is notorious that such serious Christians are all holy, sober, and just, and so greatly differing from the corrupted world, as fully proveth that God owneth that gospel which he maketh so effectual to so great a change.

Here consider, 1. What that change is. 2. How hard and great a work it is. 3. That it is certainly a work of God. 4. That the gospel is the means by which God doth it.

1. The nature of his holy work on all serious, sincere Christians, is, it sets all their hopes and hearts on the promised glory of the life to come, and turns the very nature of their wills into the predominant love of God and man, and of heaven and holiness. It mortifieth all fleshly lusts, and subjects sense to reason and faith, the body to the soul, and all to God. It sets a man's heart on the sincere study of doing all the good he can in the world, to friends, neighbours, and enemies, especially the most public good ; to live soberly, righteously, and godly, is his delight. Sin is his chief hatred, and nothing more grievous to him than he that cannot reach to greater perfection in faith, hope, obedience, patience, and in heavenly love and joy. It causeth a man to contemn wealth, honour, and fleshly pleasure, and life, in comparison of God's love and life everlasting. This change of God's Spirit worketh on all true believers.

Those that are ungodly have but the name of Christians ; they never well understood what Christianity is, nor ever received it by a true belief. But all that understandingly and seriously believe in Jesus Christ, are sanctified by his Spirit.

II. And this is a greater work than miracles, in excellency and difficulty.

1. It is the very health of the souls. It is salvation itself ; it maketh man in his measure like to God, and is his image. It is a heavenly nature, and is the earnest and preparation for heaven. It delivereth man from the greatest evil on earth, and giveth him the firmest peace and joy, in his peace with God ; the pardon of his sins, and the hope of everlasting glory.

2. It is easy to discern how great a work this is, by the deep roots of all the contrary vices in the corrupted nature of man. Experience assureth us that man, by vitiated nature, is proud and ignorant, and savoureth little but the things of the flesh, and worldly interest, and is a slave to his appetite and lust: his bodily prosperity is all that really hath his heart. Yea, if God restrain them not, all wicked men are bitter enemies to all that are truly wise and holy, even among heathens and infidels; if any be but better than the rest, the wicked are their deadly enemies. There is so visible an enmity between godliness and wickedness, the seed of Christ, and of the serpent in the world, as is a great confirmation of the Scripture which describeth it. And it is not the name of Christians that altereth men's nature. We here, that have peace from all the world, are under such implacable hatred of wicked men, that call themselves Christians, that so many bears or wolves would be less hurtful to us.

3. And the universal spreading of this wickedness over all the earth, in all ages and nations, doth tell us how great a work it is to cure it.

4. And so doth the frustration of all other means, till the Spirit of God do it by setting home the gospel upon the heart. Children will grow up in wickedness, against all the counsel, love, and correction of their parents. No words, no reason, will prevail with them, more than with drunken men or beasts.

5. We find it a very hard thing to cure a man of some one rooted sin, much more of all.

6. The common misery of the world proclaimeth man's vice, and the difficulty of the cure. How else comes the world to live in self-seeking falsehood, fraud, malice, and in bloody wars, worse than wolves and serpents against each other.

7. Lastly, where God cureth this by true believing, it is done with the pangs of sharp repentance, and a great conflict, before God's Spirit overcometh.

III. It is evident, then, that this sanctification of souls is an eminent work of God himself. 1. In that it is yet done on so many of his chosen ones in all ages and places.

2. In that, as hard as it is, he usually turneth the hearts of sinners to himself, in a very little time. Sometimes by one sermon.

3. It is a work that none can do but God, who hath the power of souls.

4. It is a work so good, that it beareth God's own image.

It is but the writing of his law and gospel on men's hearts. None is so much for it as God. Satan apparently fighteth against it with all the power he can raise in the world. Mark it, and you will find that most of the stir that there is in the world, by false teachers, and tyrants, and private malice, is but Satan's wars against faith, and holiness, and love. Certainly it is not he that promoteth them.

IV. And it is evident, in experience, that it is the gospel of Christ which God useth and blesseth, to do this great sanctifying work on souls. Among Christians none are converted by any other means. And God would not bless a word of falsehood and deceit to such great and excellent effects. All that are made holy and heavenly, and truly conscionable, among us, are made so by Christ's gospel. And all the wicked are enemies to the serious practice of it, or rebels that despise it. The effects daily prove that God himself owneth it as his word.

If you say, there are as good men among the heathens, and Mahometans, as holy, heavenly, and just: I answer, it is none of my business to depreciate other men, but I can say, 1. That I have lived above seventy-seven years, and I never knew one serious, holy person in England that was made such by the writings of heathens or Mahometans. 2. Many excellent things are in the writings of some heathens, Plato, Cicero, Hierocles, Plutarch, Antonine, Epictetus, and many others; but I miss in them the expressions of that holy and heavenly frame of mind and life, and that victory over the flesh and world, which Christianity containeth.

3. Christ is like the sun, whose beams give some light before it is seen itself at its rising, and after it is set. The light of Jews and heathens was as the dawning of the day before sun-rising. And the light among the Mahometans is like the light of the sun which leaveth it when it is set.

Doubtless, the same God who hath used Mahometans to be his dreadful scourge to wicked Christians, who abused the gospel by a false profession, hath also used them to do abundance of good against idolatry in the heathen world. Wherever they come, idolatry is destroyed. Yea, the corrupt Christians, Greeks, and especially papists, that worship images, angels, and bread, are rebuked, and condemned justly by Mahometans. But O that they who have conquered so far by the sword, were conquered by the sacred word of truth, and truly understood the mystery of redemption, and the doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Obj. But they think us idolaters for saying that Christ is God, and believing the Trinity.

I. As to the Trinity: it is no contradiction that one fire or sun should have essentially a virtue or power to move, light, and heat; nor that one soul should have a power of vegetation, sense, and reason; nor as rational, to have a peculiar power or vitality, intellection, and free-will. Why then should the Trinity seem incredible?

II. We do not believe that the Godhead hath any change, or is made flesh, or the manhood made God, but that the Godhead is incomprehensibly united to the human nature by assumption, so as he is united to no other creature, by and for those peculiar operations on the humanity of Christ, which make him our Redeemer.

They that well think that God is all in all things, more than a soul to all the world, and as near to us as our souls to our bodies, in whom we live, and move, and have our being, will find that it is more difficult to apprehend, how God is further from any soul, than that he is so much one with Christ: save that different operations of God on his creatures are apparent to us.

By all this we see that every sanctified Christian hath the certain witness in himself that Christ is true. He is truly a physician that healeth, and a Saviour that saveth all that seriously believe and obey him. The Spirit of God in a new, and holy, and heavenly nature of spiritual life, and light, and love, is the witness.

VI. 'The sixth article in my text is 'Received up into glory.'

That Christ, after forty days' continuance on earth, was taken up into heaven, in the sight of his disciples, is a matter of fact of which we have all the forementioned infallible proof, which I must not here again repeat.

And, I. If Christ were not glorified now in heaven, he could not send down his Spirit with his word on earth, nor have enabled the first witnesses to speak with all tongues, and heal the sick, and raise the dead, and do all the miracles which they did. A dead man cannot send down the holy Spirit in likeness of fiery cloven tongues, nor enable thousands to do such works; nor could he do what is done on the souls of serious believers in all ages and nations to this day. He is sure alive that makes men live; and in heaven, that draws up hearts to heaven.

2. And this is our hope and joy: heaven and earth are in his

power. The suffering and work which he performed for us on earth was short, but his heavenly intercession and reign is everlasting. Guilty souls can have no immediate access to God. All is by a Mediator: all our receivings from God are by him: and all our services are returned by him, and accepted for his sake. And as he is the Mediator between his Father and us, his Spirit intercedeth between him and us. By his Spirit he giveth us holy desires, and every grace. And by his Spirit we exercise them in returns to him.

And our glorified Saviour hath Satan, and all our enemies, in his power: life and death are at his command: all judgment is committed to him. He that hath redeemed us is preparing us for heaven, and it is for us, and receiveth our departing souls to his own joy and glory. He hath promised us that we shall be with him where he is, and shall see his glory. He that is our Saviour, will be our Judge. He will come with thousands of his angels to the confusion of wicked unbelievers, and to be glorified in his saints. He will make a new heaven and a new earth, in which righteousness shall dwell. Angels and glorified saints shall, with Christ our head, make one city of God, or holy society and choir, in perfect love and joy, to praise the blessed God for ever.

I. The differences between this world, and that which I am going to.

I. This world is God's footstool. That is his throne.

II. Here are his works of inferior nature and of grace. There he shineth forth in perfect glory.

III. Here is gross, receptive matter moved by invisible powers. There are the noblest efficient communicative powers moving all.

IV. This is the inferior, subject, governed world. That is the superior, regent world.

V. This is a world of trial, where the soul is his that can win its consent. That is a world where the will is perfectly determined and fixed.

VI. Satan winning men's consent hath here a large dominion of fools. There he is cast out, and hath no possession.

VII. Here he is a tempter and troubler of the best. There he hath neither power to tempt nor trouble.

VIII. This world is as the dark womb where we are regenerated. That is the world of glorious light into which we are born.

IX. Here we dwell on a world of sordid earth. There we shall dwell in a world of celestial light and glory.

X. Here we dwell in a troublesome, tempting, perishing body. There we are delivered from this burden and prison into glorious liberty.

XI. Here we are under a troublesome cure of our maladies. There we are perfectly healed, rejoicing in our Physician's praise.

XII. Here we are using the means in weariness and hope. There we obtain the end in full fruition.

XIII. Here sin maketh us loathsome to ourselves, and our own annoyance. There we shall love God in ourselves, and our perfect selves in God.

XIV. Here all our duties are defiled with sinful imperfection. There perfect souls will perfectly love and praise their God.

XV. Here Satan's temptations are a continual danger and molestation. There perfect victory hath ended our temptations.

XVI. Here still there is a remnant of the curse and punishment of sin. Pardon and deliverance are perfected there.

XVII. Repenting, shame, sorrow, and fear, are here part of my necessary work. There all the troublesome part is past, and utterly excluded.

XVIII. Here we see darkly, as in a glass, the invisible world of spirits. There we shall see them as face to face.

XIX. Here faith, alas! too weak, must serve instead of sight. There presence and sight suspend the use of such believing.

XX. Desire and hope are here our very life and work. But there it will be full felicity in fruition.

XXI. Our hopes are here oft mixed with grievous doubts and fears. But there full possession ends them all.

XXII. Our holy affections are here corrupted with carnal mixtures. But there all are purely holy and divine.

XXIII. The coldness of our divine love is here our sin and misery. The perfection of it will be there our perfect holiness and joy.

XXIV. Here, though the will itself be imperfect, we cannot be and do what we would. There will, and deed, and attainment, will all be fully perfect.

XXV. Here, by ignorance and self-love, I have desires which God denieth. There perfect desires shall be perfectly fulfilled.

XXVI. Here pinching wants of something or other, and

troublesome cares, are daily burdens. Nothing is there wanting, and God hath ended all their cares.

XXVII. Sense here rebelleth against faith, and reason, and oft overcometh. Sense there shall be only holy, and no discord be in our faculties or acts.

XXVIII. Pleasures and contents here are short, narrow, and twisted with their contraries. There they are objectively pure and boundless, and subjectively total and absolute.

XXIX. Vanity and vexation are here the titles of transitory things. Reality, perfection, and glory, are the titles of the things above.

XXX. This world is a point of God's creation, a narrow place for a few passengers. Above are the vast, capacious regions, sufficient for all saints and angels.

XXXI. This world is as Newgate, and hell as Tyburn; some are hence saved, and some condemned. The other world is the glorious kingdom of Jehovah with the blessed.

XXXII. It was here that Christ was tempted, scorned, and crucified. It is there where he reigneth in glory over all.

XXXIII. The spiritual life is here as a spark or seed. It is there a glorious flame of love, and joy, and the perfect fruit and flower.

XXXIV. We have here but the first-fruits, earnest, and pledge. There is the full and glorious harvest and perfection.

XXXV. We are here children in minority, little differing from servants. There we shall have full possession of the inheritance.

XXXVI. The prospect of pain, death, grave, and rottenness, blasteth all the pleasures here. There is no death, or any fear of the ending of felicity.

XXXVII. Here, even God's word is imperfectly understood, and errors swarm, even in the best. All mysteries of nature and grace are there unveiled in the world of light.

XXXVIII. Many of God's promises are here unfulfilled, and our prayers unanswered. There truth shineth in the full performance of them all.

XXXIX. Our grace is here so weak, and hearts so dark, that our sincerity is oft doubted of. There the flames of love and joy leave no place for such a doubt.

XL. By our inconstancy, here one day is joyful and another sad. But there our joys have no interruption.

XLII. We dwell here with sinful companions, like ourselves, in flesh. There holy angels and souls, with Christ, are all our company.

XLIII. Our best friends and helpers are here, in part, our hinderers by sin. There all concur in the harmony of active love.

XLIV. Our errors and corruptions make us also hurtful and troublesome to our friends. But there both Christ and they forgive us, and we shall trouble them no more.

XLV. Selfishness and cross interests here jar, and mar our conversation. There perfect love will make the joy of every saint and angel mine.

XLVI. A militant church imperfectly sanctified here liveth in scandal and sad divisions. The glorious church united in God in perfect love hath no contention.

XLVII. Sin and error here turn our very public worship into jars. The celestial harmony of joyful love and praise is, to mortals, inconceivable.

XLVIII. Weak, blind, and wicked teachers here do keep the most in delusion and division. There glorious light hath banished all lies, deceit, and darkness.

XLIX. The wills of blind tyrants is the law of most on earth. The wisdom and will of the most holy God is the law of the heavenly society.

L. Lies here cloud the innocency of the just, and render truth and goodness odious. All false judgments are there reversed, and slander is silenced, and the righteous justified.

LI. Government is here exercised by terror and violence. But there God ruleth by light, love, and absolute delight.

LII. Enemies reproach, and persecution here annoy and tempt us. All storms are there past, and the conquerors crowned in joyful rest.

LIII. The glory of divine love and holiness is clouded here by the abounding of sin, and the greatness of Satan's kingdom upon earth. But the vast, glorious, heavenly kingdom, to which this earth is but a point and prison, will banish all such erring thoughts, and glorify God's love and goodness for ever.

LIV. This is the world which, as corrupted, is called an enemy to God and us, and which, as such, we renounce in baptism, and must be saved from. That is the world which we seek, pray, and wait for all our lives, and for which all the tempting vanities of this must be forsaken.

LIV. This body and world is like our riding clothes, our horse, our way, and inn, and travelling company; all but for our journey homeward. The other is our city of blessedness, and everlasting rest, to which all grace inclineth souls, and all present means and mercies tend.

LV. The very ignorance of nature and sensible things makes this life a very labyrinth, and our studies, sciences, and learned conversation, to be much like a dream, or puppet play, and a childish stir about mere words. But in heaven, an universal knowledge of God's wonderful works, will not be the least of the glory in which he will shine to saints.

LVI. Distance and darkness of souls here in flesh, who would fain know more of God and the heavenly world, and cannot, doth make our lives a burden by these unsatisfied desires. There glorious presence and intuition giveth full satisfaction.

LVII. Our sin and imperfection here render us incapable of being the objects of God's full, complacential love, though we have his benevolence, which will bring us to it. But there we shall, in our several measures, perfectly please God, and be perfectly pleased in God for ever.

LVIII. All things here are short and transitory from their beginning, posting towards their end, which is near and sure, and still in our eye. So short is time, that beings here are next to nothing; the bubble of worldly prosperity, pomp, and fleshly pleasure, doth swell up, and break in so short a moment; as that it is, and is not, almost at once. But the heavenly substances, and their work, and joys, are crowned by duration, being assuredly everlasting.

Such, O my soul, is the blessed change which God will make.

The reasons and helps of my belief and hope of this perfection.

I. Natural reason assureth me, that God made all creatures fitted to their intended use; even brutes are more fit for their several offices than man is. He giveth no creature its faculties in vain; whatever a wise man maketh, he fits it to the use which he made it for; but man's faculties are enabled to think of a God, of our relation, and our duty to him, of our hopes from him, and our fears of him; of the state of our souls related to his judgment; of what will befall us after death, reward, or punishment, and how to prepare for it. This nature, and its faculties and powers, are not made in vain.

II. Reason assureth me, that all men are bound by nature to prefer the least probability of a life of everlasting joy before all the prosperity of this world; and to suffer the loss of all this short vanity, to escape the least possibility of endless misery; and nature hath such notices of rewards and punishments after death, that no man can say that he is sure there is no such thing. From whence it followeth, that all men are bound by the very law of nature, to be religious, and to seek first and most their salvation in the life to come. And if so, it is certain that there is such a thing to be obtained; else God had made the very nature of man to be deceived by itself, and to spend the chief part, yea, all his life, through labour and suffering, for that which is not; and so made his greatest duty to be his greatest deceit and misery; and the worst men should be least deceived. But all this is not to be imputed to our wise and good Creator.

III. The universal sense of moral good and evil in all mankind, is a great evidence of another life. The vilest atheist cannot abide to be accounted a knave, a liar, and a bad man; nor will equal a vicious servant with another. All would be thought good, who will not be good. And doth not God make a greater difference than man? and will he not show it?

IV. The world is actually ruled much by the hopes and fears of another life, and cannot well be ruled without it, according to the nature of man; but the Almighty, most wise, and most holy God needs not, and will not rule the world by mere deceit.

V. The gospel of Christ hath brought life and immortality into a clearer light than that of nature; and it must be by believing in Christ that we must have our full satisfaction. Oh, what hath God done in the wonders of redemption to make us sure! And against the doubts that are apt to rise from some hard particular text of Scripture, it must be considered, 1. That Christ and his apostles did put the ascertaining seal of the many uncontrolled miracles to the gospel doctrine, primarily; which doctrine, 1. Was delivered and sealed eight years before any of the New Testament was written, and almost seventy before the last. 2. And Christ did not speak in the language in which the gospel is written to us; so that being but a translation as to his own words the matter is the thing first sealed.

II. And that it was the two legislative mediators, Moses and Christ, who came with the great stream of uncontrolled miracles; it being necessary that men should have full proof that a law or doctrine is of God, before they believe it; but the priests and prophets after Moses, and the preachers and pastors of the christian church, who were not commissioned to bring men any new laws or gospel, but to proclaim and teach that which they received, needed no such new testimony of miracles.

III. The belief of every particular priest or prophet after Moses, or every pastor after Christ and his apostles, was not of the same degree of necessity to salvation as the belief of the law and gospel itself. Therefore, though all the holy Scripture be true, the law and the gospel must be much differenced from the rest.

IV. The history of the law and gospel have full, ascertaining, historical evidence; or else there is none such in the world. Therefore the doctrine must be true.

V. The prophecies fulfilled prove the gospel true.

VI. And the divine impress on the whole.

VII. And the sanctifying work of the Spirit wrought by it, in all nations and ages, on serious believers, is a constant, divine attestation.

VIII. And as my faith hath so sure a foundation, it confirmeth my faith and hope, that it hath been so long and great a work of God, by his Word and Spirit on my soul, to raise it to believe, and love, and desire, that holy state of perfection and fruition which I hope for. That which hath made me so much better than I else had been, and turned my heart and life (though imperfectly) to things above the pleasures of the flesh, must needs be of God; and God would never send his grace to work my heart to deceit and lies, and give me such graces as shall all be frustrate; his Spirit is the earnest and first-fruits of glory.

IX. And all the course of religious and moral duty which he hath commanded me, and in which he hath employed my life, were never imposed to deceive me; I am sure, by nature and Scripture, that it is my duty to love God and my neighbour, to desire protection, and to serve God, and do good with all my time and power, and to trust God for my reward, believing that all this shall not be in vain; nor that which is best be made my loss. O blessed be God for commands and holy duty; for they

are equal to promises. Who can fear that he shall lose by seeking God?

X. As God hath sealed the truth of his word as aforesaid, so he hath, by an instituted office and ordinance, sealed and delivered to myself his covenant with the gift of Christ and life, in baptism, and the Lord's supper.

XI. He hath given me such a love to holy things and persons, that I greatly long to see his church in perfect light, and love, and concord; oh! how sweet would it be to see all men wise, and holy, and joyfully praising God. Every Christian longs for this; and, therefore, such a state will be.

XII. I have found here the great benefit of the love and ministry of angels, such as is described in Psalm xci. They have kept me night and day, which confirmeth my hope that I shall dwell with them; for I love them better than men, because they love and serve God better.

XIII. That low communion which I have here with God by Christ and the Spirit, in his answer to my prayers, supports, comforts, experience, tends to more.

XIV. The pleasure which I have by love, in thinking of the happiness of my many, many, many holy departed friends, and of the glory of Christ, and the heavenly Jerusalem, is sure some hopeful approach towards their state.

XV. When I see the fire mount upward, and think that spirits are of a more sublime and excellent nature than fire; and when I see that all that is done in this world, is done by spiritual unseen powers, which move this gross and drossy matter, it puts me past doubt, that my soul, being a spirit, hath a vast and glorious world of spirits to ascend to. God hath, by nature, put into all things an aggregative, uniting inclination: earth hath no other natural motion. The ascent of fire tells us its element is above; and spirits naturally incline to spirits, and holy spirits peculiarly are inclined to the holy.

XVI. I am sure, 1. By understanding that I understand, and by willing that I will, &c. 2. I am sure by these acts, that I have the power or faculties to do them: for none doth that which it cannot do. 3. And I know that it is a substance that hath these powers: for nothing can do nothing.

My soul, then, being certainly an intellective, volitive, vital substance, 1. I have no reason to think, that God, who annihilateth not the least sand, will annihilate so noble a substance.

2. Nor that he will destroy those powers which are its essential form, and turn it into some other thing.

3. Nor that such essential powers shall lie as dead and unactive, and so be continued in vain.

4. There remaining, therefore, nothing uncertain to natural reason, but the continuance of individuation to separate souls.

1. Apparitions and witches have put that out of doubt, notwithstanding many fables and delusions. 2. Christ hath put it more out of doubt. 3. While substance, faculties, and acts continue, it is the error of our selfish state in flesh, which maketh any fear too near an union, which shall end our individuation. The greatest union will be the greatest perfection, and no loss to souls.

XVII. God's wonderful providences for the church and single saints on earth are such as tell us of that love and care, which will bring them afterwards to him.

XVIII. The nature of God taketh off the terror of my departure much; I am sure I shall die at the will, and into the hand, of infinite essential love and goodness; whose love should draw up my longing soul.

XIX. I am going to a God whose mercies have long told me, that he loveth me better than my dearest friend doth, and better than I love myself, and is a far better chooser of my lot.

XX. As he hath absolute right to dispose of his own, so indeed the fulfilling of his will is the ultimate end of all things, and therefore most desirable in itself: and his will shall be fulfilled on me.

XXI. I go to a glorified Saviour, who came down to fetch me up, and hath conquered and sanctified death, and made it my birth-day for glory, and taketh me for his dear-bought own and interest, and is in glory ready to receive his own.

XXII. I go to that Saviour who, on the cross, commendeth his spirit into his Father's hand, and taught me, with dying Stephen, to say, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit."

XXIII. I go no solitary, untrodden way, but follow all the faithful since the death of Abel, to this day, (save Enoch and Elias,) who all went by death into that glorious world, where I shall find them.

XXIV. I have so long groaned under a languid body, and in a blind, distracted, and (by man) incurable world, where Satan, by lies, malice, and murder, reigneth in—alas! how many; and

specially am so weary of my own darkness, and sinful imperfection, that I have great reason to be willing of deliverance.

XXV. I have had so large a share of mercies in this world already, in time, and manifold comforts from God, that reason commandeth me to rest in God's time for my removal.

XXVI. I shall leave some fruits, not useless, to serve the church when I am gone: and if good be done, I have my end.

XXVII. When I am gone, God will raise up and use others to do his appointed work on earth: and a church shall be continued to his praise: and the spirits in heaven will rejoice therein.

XXVIII. When I am gone, I shall not wish to be again on earth.

XXIX. Satan, by his temptations, and all his instruments, would never have done so much as he doth in the world to keep us from heaven, if there were not a heaven which conquerors obtain.

XXX. When darkness and uncertainty of the manner of the action and fruition of separated souls would daunt me, it is enough to know explicitly so much as is explicitly revealed, and implicitly to trust Christ with all the rest: our eyes are in our head; who knoweth for us? Knowledge of glory is part of fruition: and therefore we must expect here no more than is suited to a life of faith.

XXXI. All my part is to do my own duty, and then trust God; obeying his commanding will, and fully and joyfully resting in his disposing and rewarding will. There is no rest for souls but in the will of God, and there with full trust to repose our souls in life, and, at death, is the only way of a safe and comfortable departure.

XXXII. The glorious marriage-day of the Lamb cannot now be far off, when the number of the elect shall be complete, and Christ will come with his glorious angels, and will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all believers, and there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; and that kingdom shall come, where that which God hath prepared for them that love him, eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to have a formal, full conception of it.

Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

Fear not then, O my soul, to lay down this flesh: mercy hath

kept it up for my preparing work ; but, oh, what a burdensome and chargeable companion hath it been ! Is it better than the dwelling-place of perfect spirits ? Oh, what are my groans, and all my cold and faint petitions, and my dull thanksgiving, to their harmonious, joyful praise ? If a day in God's courts be better than a thousand, what is a day, yea, what is everlastingness in the heavenly society and work. Oh, how hateful a thing is darkness and unbelief, when the remnants of them thus stop poor souls in their ascent, and make us half unwilling to go home ! What ! unwilling to be with my glorified Lord ! Unwilling to be with saints and angels, who are all life, and light, and love ! Unwilling to see the glory of Jehovah ! O foolish, sinful soul ! hath Christ done so much to purchase the heavenly glory for thee, and now art thou unwilling to go into the possession of it ? Hast thou been seeking, and praying, and labouring, and suffering so many years, for that which now thou seemest scarce willing to obtain ? Dost thou not judge thyself unworthy of eternal life, when thou no more desirest to enjoy it ? All this is along of thy too much adherence unto self and sense : thou art still desiring sensitive satisfaction, and, not content to know thy part, wouldest know that for thyself which Christ knoweth for thee ; as if thou couldest better trust thyself than him. Fear not, weak soul, it is our Father's good pleasure to give thee the kingdom : trust infinite power, wisdom, and love : trust that faithful, gracious Saviour who hath so wonderfully merited to be trusted : trust that promise which never deceived any one, and which is confirmed by so many miracles, and by the oath, and by the Spirit, of God. Whenever thou departest from this house of flesh, the arms of mercy are open to embrace thee ; yea, essential, transcendent love is ready to receive thee : the Spirit of love hath sealed thee to that blessed state : Christ will present thee justified and accepted. Most of my old, holy, familiar friends are gone before me, and all the rest that died since the world began. And the few imperfect ones left behind are hasting after them apace, and if I go before, will quickly overtake me : though they weep as if it were for a long separation, it is their great mistake : the gate of death stands all day open, and my sorrowful friends are quickly following me, as I am now following those for whom I sorrowed. Oh, pity them who are left a while under the temptations, dangers, and fears, which have so long been thine own affliction ! but be not afraid of the day of

thy deliverance, and the bosom of everlasting love, and the society of the wise, and just, and holy, and of the end of all thy troubles, and the entrance into the joy of thy Lord, and the place and state of all thy hope. Oh, say, not notionally only, as from argumentative conviction, but confidently, and with glad desire and hope, to depart and be with Christ, is far better than to be here.

But, O my God, I have much more hope in speaking to thee than to myself. Long may I plead with this dark and dull, yet fearful soul, before I can plead it into joyful hopes and heavenly desires, unless thou shine on it with the light of thy countenance, and thou, whom my soul must trust and love, wilt give me faith and love themselves. I thank thee for convincing arguments: but had this been all the strength of my faith and hope, the tempter might have proved too subtle for me in dispute. I thank thee that some experience tells me, that a holy appetite to heavenly work, and a love to the heavenly company and state, doth more to make me willing to die, and think, with pleasure, of my change, than ever bare arguments would have done. Oh, send down the streams of thy love into my soul, and that will powerfully draw it up by longings for the near and full fruition! Oh, give me more of the divine and heavenly nature, and it will be natural and easy to me to desire to be with thee: send more of the heavenly joys into this soul, and it will long for heaven, the place of joy! I must not hope on earth for any such acquaintance with the world above as is proper to the enjoying state. But if the sun can send its illuminating, warming rays, to such a world as this, according to the various disposition of the recipients; doubtless thou hast thy effectual, though unsearchable, ways, of illuminating, sanctifying, and attractive influence on souls. And one such beam of thy pleased face, one taste of thy complacential love, will kindle my love, and draw up my desires, and make my pains and sickness tolerable; I shall then put off this clothing with the less reluctance, and willingly leave my flesh to the dust, and sing my *nunc dimittis*, when I have thus seen and tasted thy salvation. O my God, let not thy strengthening, comforting grace now forsake me, lest it should overwhelm me with the fears of being finally forsaken. Dwell in me as the God of love and joy, that I may long to dwell in love and joy with thee for ever. As grace abounded where sin abounded, let thy strengthening and comforting mercy abound when weakness increaseth, and my ne-

cessities abound. My flesh and my heart faileth, but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever : this short life is almost at an end ; but thy loving-kindness is better than life : I know not with what pains thou wilt further try me ; but if I love thee, thou hast promised that all things shall work together for my good. The world that I am going to by death is not apparent to my sight ; but my life is hid with Christ in God ; and, because he liveth, we shall live ; and we shall be with him where he is ; and when he appeareth, we shall appear with him in glory ; and shall enter into our Master's joy, and be for ever with the Lord. Amen.

What sensible manifestation of his kingdom Christ gave in his transfiguration.

Sect. 1. Our Lord, who brought life and immortality to light, well knew the difficulty of believing so great things unseen : and therefore it pleased him to give men some sensible helps by demonstration. In Matt. xvi. and xvii. 1, 2, &c. ; Mark ix. 1 ; Luke ix. 28, he promised some of his disciples a sight of his kingdom as coming in power ; or such a glimpse as Moses had of the back parts of God's glory : this he performed first in his transfiguration, as afterward in his resurrection, ascension, and sending the Holy Ghost to enable them, with power, to preach, and work miracles, and convert the nations.

Sect. 2. By the kingdom of God, is meant God's government of his holy ones, by a heavenly communication of life, light, and love, initially, on earth by grace, and perfectly in heaven by glory. A special theocracy.

Sect. 3. For the understanding of this we must know, that when God had made man good, in his image, he conversed with him in a heavenly manner, either immediately, or by an angel, speaking to him, and telling him his will. But man being made a free, self-determining agent, he was left to choose whom he would follow : and hearkening unto Satan, and turning from God, he became a slave of Satan, and gave him advantage to be his deceiving ruler : not that man's rebellion nullified God's power, or disposing government, or took man from under obligation to obedience ; but that, forsaking God, he was much, though not wholly, forsaken by his special, fatherly, approving government, and left to Satan and his own will : but the eternal Word interposing for man's reprimand and redemption, undertook to break the serpent's head, and to conquer and cast out

him that had deceived and captivated man : and, choosing out a special seed, he made them a peculiar people, and set up a heavenly, prophetic government over them, himself, by heavenly revelation, making their laws, and choosing their chief governors under him, from time to time, and would not leave it to blind and sinful man to make laws, or choose princes, for themselves, but would keep them in a special dependence upon heaven. But the carnal Israelites having provoked God by odious idolatry to deny them much of the benefit of government (save when they repented, and cried to him for help) they thought to amend this by choosing a king like other nations, and ending their dependence on heavenly revelation, and choice for government : and so theocracy was turned into a more human regiment, and God more cast off : though yet he would not quite forsake them. And the rest of the world was yet more left under the power of Satan, and their own corrupted mind and will ; so that Satan hath both an internal kingdom in wicked souls, and a visible political government of the wicked kingdoms of the world, ruling them by men that are ruled by him. And as Christ came to cast him out of men's hearts by his sanctifying, conquering Spirit, so also to cast him out of the political Government of the kingdoms of the world, and to bring them under the laws, and officers, and Spirit of Christ, and rule them by heavenly power and love as his own kingdoms, that he may bring them to perfection in one celestial kingdom at last. And in this sense we pray, "Thy kingdom come."

SECT. 4. To make men believe that he is the heavenly King sent from God, to cast down Satan's kingdom, was the great business of the preaching of the gospel : this he would demonstrate, as by all his miracles which showed him to have the victory of devils, and to be the Lord of life, so also by visible apparition in glory. And it is said, (1 John v. 7, 8,) that there are three witnesses in heaven, and three on earth, so here Christ would have three heavenly and three earthly witnesses of his transfiguration. From heaven he had the witness, 1. Of a voice, proclaiming, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him." 2. Of Moses, the chief law-giver. 3. And of Elias, the chief prophet ; to tell us, that the law and the prophets are his prognosticating witnesses : but "hear him" notifieth to us, that Christ and his gospel are to be heard above the law and the prophets, and to teach us more than they could teach us : the law was given by Moses (with its types and sha-

dows) but grace and truth (the substance so typified) are by Jesus Christ.

Sect. 5. Light and glory are often of the same signification. Christ was transfigured into a lucid, glorious appearance of body: he tells us by this, that he would have us have some sort of idea of his kingdom, fetched from sense; many apparitions of angels have been in lights. Christ appeared to Saul in a visible light. (Acts ix.) So did he to John: (Rev. i, &c. :) God and the Lamb are the light of the New Jerusalem. It is an inheritance of the saints in light.

Some seem to me to think too basely of sense, and too far to separate it from intellectual spirits, both as to power, act, and object: and all because they find it in lower creatures. They might accordingly deny substantiality to spirits, because brutes are substances: the higher have all the perfections of the lower, either formally or eminently. It is not a spirit's perfection to be insensible, or to have nothing to do with sensible things, but to be eminently sensible, and to be superior agents on lower sensibles. God is love: and love is complacency: and a high degree of complacency is delight or joy. So that God is essential, infinite joy, but without that drossy quality which is proper to souls in flesh, and all that imperfection which belongs to creatures. Can we tell what it is to enter into our Master's joy, or joyfully to love and praise him, without any sense: I rather think, that as vigorous youth makes men capable of more delight than decrepit, languid, painful age and sickness, so heaven shall, by perfecting our natures, make them capable of inconceivably more joy than any on earth is capable of.

And as we shall have sense in exaltation as to power and act, so we shall have sensible objects. God himself delighteth in all his works, and so shall we. We must not, on pretence of taking the heavenly Jerusalem to be merely spiritual, deprive ourselves of all the sensible ideas of it which God's description offereth to us. Light is sensible; Christ glorified there is sensible; Moses and Elias were sensible to Peter, James, and John. Lazarus and Abraham were sensible to the man in hell. (Luke xvi.) Stephen saw heaven open, and Christ sitting at the right hand of God. And all eyes shall see him at his glorious return. Heavenly glory is not enjoyed only by mere thinking and knowing, nor as in a dream, but by the most eminent intellectual sensation, exalted and invigorated.

Sect. 6. Say not then, O my soul, that this kingdom of glory

is so far above thee, that thou canst have no idea of it. Think not that it is therefore unmeet for thy desiring and joyful hopes, because thou canst not know what it is. Hast thou no conception of the difference between light and darkness? If thou hadst been but one year kept in absolute darkness, wouldest thou have no desiring thoughts of light? The blind think themselves half dead while they are alive. Indeed, the faculty and object must be suitable; light may be too great for our weak eyes, as heat may be torment in an unsuitable degree; but when our souls are perfected, they will be suitable recipients of a more glorious light than we can here endure. Moses is not there covered in a cleft of the rock, because he could see but as the back part of God's glory. We must see here but as in a glass, but there as face to face. Though these organical eyes, as spectacles, shall be laid by, we shall have media more perfect, suitable to our perfect state.

And as I can think of heaven as a region of glorious light, so can I think of it as a place and state of life and love. I know somewhat of the difference of life and death, and that a living dog is better than a dead lion. And I have felt what it is to love my friends, and thence to desire their near communion as my delight; and can I then have no idea of that world, where life, light, and joyful love are the very element of souls, as water is to the fishes?

And as I can have some idea of that state in general, so may I of the state of the perfected spirits of the just which are there. They are connatural to their proper element. They are essential, created life, light, and love. And they want not substance to be the basis of those formal powers, nor objects on which to exercise them. Think not, then, that heaven is so far inconceivable, as not by any idea to be thought of. If we have no conception of it, we can have no desires of it, and no delightful hope. What can we conceive of more certainly than of life, and light, and love; of a region, and of persons essentiated of these? Do we not know what knowledge is, and see what light is, and feel what life and love are?

But it is true that our conceptions hereof are lamentably imperfect; and so they must be till possession, fruition, and exercise, perfect them. Who knoweth what light or sight is, but by seeing; or what knowledge is, but by knowing; or what love and joy are, but by love and rejoicing? And who knows

what perfect sight, knowledge, love, and joy are, but by perfect seeing, knowing, loving, and rejoicing? No man by an intuitive or immediate perception. But some abstractive conceptions of it we may have by reasoning deduction from that poor degree which we here in the kingdom of grace possess.

Can I perceive substantiality in the dark terrene appearances, which are but mutable lifeless matter agitated and used by invisible powers, and shall I think of those unseen, powerful substances, as if they were less substantial for being spiritual, or were not objects for a knowing thought? Are the stars which I see less substantial than a carcass in a darksome grave? The Lord that appeared in shining glory hath members in their measure like himself; and hath promised that we shall shine as stars in the kingdom of his Father. If some degree of this be here performed in them who are called the children of light, and the lights of the world, how much more will they shine in the world of light? They that call light a quality, or an act, must confess it hath a substance whose quality or act it is. Alas! what a deceived thing is a sensual unbeliever, who spendeth his life in the pursuit of fugitive shadows, and walketh in a vain show, and thinks of spiritual, glorious substances, as if they were the nothings or delusions of a dream.

Sect. 6. Christ, Moses, and Elias, here visibly appeared as three distinct, individual persons. This tells us that it is a false conceit that death ceaseth individuation, and turneth all souls into one (of which before); perfect, indivisible, infinite unity is proper to God; from this one is multiplicity. Reason forbids us, when we see the numberless individuals in this world, and see also the numerous stars above, to imagine that all the worlds above us have so much of divine perfection, as to be but one undivided substance, and to have no multiplicity of inhabitants. Yea, some of those Sadducees hold that the stars are worlds inhabited as the earth is. And why then should they think whithersoever souls go, that they cease their individuation, when they go among individuals? But Christ hath confuted them even to sense. Moses is Moses still, and Elias is Elias still; and all our friends that are gone to Christ are the same still that they were, and may be called by the same names. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the same in heaven; and Lazarus was Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. When we lay by flesh, and are unclothed, we put not off our personality.

Every one shall receive his own reward according to what he hath done in the body, when every one must give account of his own works and talents.

Why then may not I, with distinct conceptions and joyful desires, look after the souls of my departed friends, that are now in the celestial kingdom? 'Though malignity hath scorned me for naming some few in my 'Saints' Rest,' being such as the despisers hated, yet I forbear not, on such accounts, to solace myself by naming more, but because they are more than it is fit to number. In all places where I have lived, how many excellent souls (though here they were not perfect) are gone to Christ. How sweet is the remembrance of the communion which I had with many of them in Shrewsbury, and other parts of Shropshire; of many at Dudley, and the adjoining parts; of multitudes at Kidderminster, Bewdley, and other parts of Worcestershire; of abundance at Coventry, and other parts of Warwickshire; and of many where I have sojourned in other parts of the land; and, above all, in London, and the adjoining parts. As Mr. Howe hath elegantly expressed it, in his excellent character of my excellent and dear friend, Mr. Richard Fairclough: what a multitude of blessed saints will arise at the last day out of London. And this earth is, as it were, hallowed with the dust and relics of so many blessed souls. But it is heaven that is spangled with these spiritual stars; the place honoured with them, and they with it, and all by Christ. We are like infants, or lambs, or other young ones, that cry for their dams if they be but out of sight; though they are ever so near, if they see them not, they cry as if they were not, or had forsaken them. As Christ told his disciples, that it was needful for them that he departed from them, and yet their hearts for this were sorrowful, till the Holy Ghost came upon them, as better than Christ's fleshly presence, to prepare them joyfully to follow him; so we think of our friends as almost lost to us by separation, till the heavenly Spirit tell us where they are, and prepare us to desire to be with them.

Sect. 6. Elias hath a body now in heaven, and so hath Enoch; but can we think that only two or three that are there with Christ do so much differ from all the rest, as to have bodies when the rest have none? Is there such a dissimilitude of saints in heaven? What are two or three in such a society? Doubtless their bodies are not corruptible flesh and blood, but such spiritual bodies as all saints shall have at the resurrection.

But are they in heaven such visible and shaped bodies as they appeared on the mount? The same difficulty poseth us about the risen body of Christ: he would not have Mary touch him, because he had not yet ascended to his Father; he could appear and vanish from their sight at his pleasure; and yet Thomas handled him, and felt that he had flesh and bones. That body of flesh ascended visibly up toward heaven; and yet it is not flesh and blood in heaven, but a spiritual body: for it is not worse than he will make his members. What shall we say to these things? We must say, that we are not capable of knowing them, but have reason to be thankful that we may know so much, more necessary for us. But yet it seemeth probable that the bodies of Christ, and Enoch, and Elias, were changeable according to the region in which they were to be. Christ could take up a body of flesh and blood, and immediately change that state of it into a pure and incorruptible, spiritual body, as it entered into the incorruptible, spiritual region. And so God did by Enoch and Elias. As Paul saith, that we shall not all die, (those that live till Christ's appearing) but we shall all be changed. And yet if Elias have business on the mount, he can put on the clothing of a grosser body to be seen of men, and can lay it by, or return to his more invisible, spiritual state, when he returneth to the place from whence he came. And no wonder, when angels (and the ancients say Christ, before his incarnation) assumed bodies suitable to their several businesses on earth; yea, such as could eat and drink with men; when they dwelt not in heaven so coarsely clothed.

Sect. 7. But how came Moses to have a body on the mount, who is said to have been buried, and therefore took none with him into heaven? We must still remember, that we inquire of things above our certain knowledge. But in humble conjecture we may say, that it is no more impossible for Moses to assume such a body as he appeared in on the mount, for that occasion, than for angels to appear in human shapes; and departed souls too, as many apparitions have told men. And if bad souls can do it, why not good ones, when God will have it? The tradition seemeth but a jewish dream, that God kept the body of Moses uncorrupted in the grave; and that this was it that the devil is said to strive for against Michael, that the body might be corrupted. And say others, that at this transfiguration it rose again. There need no such conceits to our satisfaction. The soul of Moses could assume a body.

Sect. 8. But still the dissimilitude of Enoch and Elias from all the saints in heaven is an unresolved difficulty. If we knew that God would have it so, it might satisfy us. But there is a symmetry in the body of Christ. And it is like that the same region hath inhabitants of the same nature. What shall we think, then, that Enoch and Elias, at their entrance into those regions, laid by their bodies, and became such as Abraham, and other holy souls? Why are they taken up to be so laid by? The corruptibility, no doubt, they did lay by. God knoweth, but it is much unknown to us. Or shall we think as all those fathers cited by Faustus Regiensis, and as Dr. More, and some of late, that all spirits are souls, and animate some bodies; and so that all in heaven have some bodies. If so, what bodies are they; and how differ they from the resurrection state? As the soul here operateth in and by the igneous spirits in our bodies, it may be so lodged in these as to take some of them with it at death, as the life of a dying plant, yet dieth not in the seed. And a man may be said to go unclothed to bed, though he put not off his shift or nearest garment, and to be clothed again when he puts on the rest. And at the resurrection, as there will be a new heaven and earth, so spirits now in heaven may have much more delightful business on the new and righteous earth than now they have, and therefore may have use for an additional body, as much differing from what they have now in heaven, as the new earth and their employment there require; and as the seed doth differ from the plant. And spirits being communicative, will be more happy by more communication. As God delighteth to do good to all his works, so the souls now confined to heaven will delight to be employed in doing good to the new earth, and to animate the bodies suited to such work; though now they have use for no other than such spiritual, lucid receptacles as are fit for the regions where they dwell. And it will be no debasement or dejection for a spirit now in heaven to animate a body at the resurrection fit for the new earth; no more than it was to angels to speak to Adam, and to Moses, to Abraham, Jacob, Manoah, and others; or than it is to the sun to enlighten and enliven things on earth.

It is a foolish thing to think, as some do, that departed souls will be as dormant and unactive as in apoplectic or sleeping persons, for want of organized bodies to act in. Spirits are essentially active, intellective, and volitive; and will God continue such essential powers in vain? Moses and Elias wanted

not bodies; and those in heaven can praise Jehovah and the Lamb with holy, concordant love and joy; whether in any sort of ethereal bodies, or without, we shall shortly know.

Sect. 8. It is said that Moses and Elias talked with Christ; this showeth that Christ hath familiar communion with the blessed. He that would come into flesh on earth, and live with man in an humbled state, and refused not familiar converse with poor men and women, and would eat and drink with publicans and sinners, will not refuse everlasting, near familiarity with the glorified. If the church be his dearly beloved spouse, and as it were one with him, as his body, surely he will be no stranger to the least and lowest member of it.

Sect. 9. But what was it that they talked about? Luke (ix. 31) saith, "They appeared in glory, and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." This was not to make it known to Christ, who came into the world to die for sin; what then was it for? Did Christ tell them of it, as not knowing it before? That is not likely neither. Did he need their comfort, as angels in his trials ministered to him and strengthened him? The particular uses of this speech we know not; but in general we know it was somewhat preparatory to his great sufferings and death.

And must Christ's sufferings and death have such preparation, and must not mine have much premeditation? And do I not need the consolatory messages of God? Carnal men would rather have chosen pleasanter discourse, than the talk of sufferings and death. But that which must be undergone, and requireth greatest strength, must be forethought of, and requireth the most preparing thoughts. It is worse than madness to be surprised with sufferings and death, before it is seriously forethought of. So sharp a trial, and so great a change, require the greatest preparation. He that can refuse to suffer and die, may refuse to talk or think of it. If Christ must have men from heaven to talk with him of his cross, what cause have we to study the cross; even all our lives to foresee it, and, by obedient consent, to submit unto it, and take it up to follow Christ, and even to determine, with Paul, to know nothing in the world but Christ and him crucified; that is, to take this for the only needful and excellent learning? But, alas! how senselessly is death and suffering talked of till it comes! We are to learn how to suffer when suffering is upon us; and to learn how to die when nature, or the physician, passes the sentence of death

on us at hand. And it is God's mercy to some of us to make our sufferings long, that we may have a competent time of learning. As we learn to write by writing, and to discourse by discoursing, and every art and trade by practice; even so by suffering we learn to suffer, and the lesson is very hard. Malefactors suffer without learning, whether they will or not; but to suffer obediently, with child-like affections, is the lesson to be learned. Oh! little, too little, do many honest Christians think how much of their excellent obedience consisteth in child-like, holy suffering; therefore they little expect it, and provide for it; and then they are overwhelmed with the unexpected surprisal when it comes. Even in the sufferings which men bring on the faithful for righteousness' sake, how many shrink, and shift off their duty, or venture on forbidden things for safety, because they were not prepared for it. The loss of goods, or imprisonment and want, seem to many almost insufferable trials. But I can tell such, by some experience, that bodily pain and torment is a far greater trial, which none of them are secured from, and requireth greater strength of faith obediently to accept it at the hand of God: and others can tell them that the violence of temptations, and the terrors of God on a wounded conscience, and troubled soul, are yet far harder than all these: and these are the saddest, because they make the mind unfit at present to improve them, and to refer them to holy ends and uses. Christ, in all his agony, and even when he cried out on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" had his intellectuals free and perfect, to know the nature, the reason, the uses, and end of all his sufferings: but so have not many poor, distressed, troubled, distracted souls. O how great a part of Christianity is it to understand and rightly bear the cross! Most of our care is how to escape it, or to be delivered from it, rather than obediently to bear it.

Sect. 10. Experience of a suffering, painful state is a great help to our understanding of the gospel. It taketh off from me the scandal of Christ's cross, and helpeth me to perceive the great use and reasons of it, when I am under sufferings. Oh! what need have I of such an example as Christ's. All the parts of his sufferings are as useful to teach me how to suffer, as the ten commandments to teach me what to do. That he was put to fly from proud, domineering pharisees, false teachers, and worldly rulers, and to converse most with the poor, in wildernesses, or various obscure places; that he was hated and per-

secuted for doing good, and accounted a sinner for neglecting men's ceremonies and traditions; that he was hardly believed, even by them that saw his miracles; and his own disciples were so slow in learning; and that in his suffering they all forsook him and fled, and one denied him with oaths and curses: all these are instructing instances. That Christ's natural, though sinless, aversation to death and suffering, and his fear, should be so powerful, and the sense of God's punishing justice so terrible, as to make his soul sorrowful, even to the death, and cast him into an agony, where he sweat water and blood, and to pray thrice that the bitter cup, if possible, might pass from him, which he came into the world to drink: all these also are teaching parts of the sufferings of Christ, that rulers, and priests, and soldiers, and the rabble, should agree to scorn him, clothe him in derision, spit on him, buffet him, scourge him, make him their jest, that came to save them; that they should make a sinner of him that never sinned, but came to destroy it, and save men from it; yea, to make him no less than a deceiver, a blasphemer, and an usurping rebel against Cæsar, and write this last as his accusation on his cross, thinking to leave his innocency no vindication or defence. For the Lord and Saviour of the world to undergo all this, is very instructing to a suffering believer: that he should, as such a malefactor, be reviled on a cross, and numbered with transgressors, and his side be pierced, and he there cry out to his Father as forsaken by him; that thus dying he was buried, and his soul went to the place of separated souls, and yet into paradise. They are excellent lessons which may be learned from all this.

I am not to suffer for others, nor to make God's justice a satisfying sacrifice for sin, as Christ did; but I must suffer God's fatherly corrections, and the castigation of paternal, healing justice. I must be saved as by fire, and pass through this purgatory, that I may be refined: I must suffer from Christ and for Christ, for my sin, and also for righteousness' sake: and I must, with a filial justification of God's holiness and chastening justice, bear his indignation, because I have sinned against him. I am predestined to be conformed to Christ's image, in suffering and in sanctity; yea, I must "count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord," (Rom. viii. 30, &c.,) for whom I must not refuse to suffer the loss of all things, and count them dung, that I may win him, and be found in him, and not only know the power of his resurrection, but

also the "fellowship of his sufferings, and be made conformable to his death." (Phil. iii. 8—10.) Paul rejoiced in such infirmities, and in his sufferings for the church, filling up that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh. (Col. i. 24.) Peter bids us "rejoice, inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, we may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Peter iv. 13.) "If we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him." (Rom. viii. 17.) It is a great gift to suffer for his sake. (Phil. i. 29.) It is for the kingdom of God that such suffer. (2 Thess. i. 5.) It is happiness and joy to suffer for righteousness' sake, for well doing. (1 Pet. ii. 10; and iii. 14, 17; and iv. 15, 16, 19; Matt. v. 10, 11.) It is the sufferings of Christ that abound in such, that their consolations may abound. (2 Cor. i. 5.)

But, alas! I suffer much more for my own sin than for Christ and righteousness: but even this also by the cross of Christ is sanctified, and made a great remedy against my sin. As Christ suffered for our sins, and yet merited by his suffering; so if we accept the castigatory punishment, and exercise repentance and mortification in our suffering, and an obedient submission to the rod, God will take this as acceptable service, and bless it to our further good.

Sect. 11. But how is it that Christ is said "to learn obedience by the things that he suffered, and so to be made perfect." (Heb. v. 8, 9.) Was he unlearned and imperfect before? He had no culpable imperfection; but his satisfactory mediation was imperfect till it was all performed: it was not perfectly done; and when it was done, he thereby was constitutively made a perfect Mediator: as he said upon the cross, "It is finished;" and as this human nature received additional acts of knowledge, as he grew up, and conversed with more objects, and so is said to increase in wisdom (as Adam knew the creatures when he saw them); so he had a new acquaintance with obedient suffering, when he was under the experience of it; and is said to learn it, in that he now exercised it.

And should not my suffering be God's school? Should I not learn obedience by it? Surely, as it smartly tells me of the evil of former disobedience, so it calls me to remember in whose hands I am, and with whom I have to do, and what is my duty in such a state: God can do no wrong to his own: he will do nothing finally hurtful to his children. In all our afflictions he is said to be afflicted, to signify that he afflicts not willingly, or

without our provocation. Justice is good, and holiness is good ; and it is good for us to repent, and be weaned from the flesh and world : and all good must be loved, and the means as such : sharp, heart-breaking sermons are displeasing to nature ; and yet to be loved for their use : and afflictions are God's powerful sermons : the proud and hardened are forced to hear them, who scorn and prosecute preachers for speaking the same things : and shall believers under sufferings be untaught ? Words are but words, but stripes go by forcible sense unto the heart : obedient submission to the greatest pains is a serious acknowledgement of God's dominion, and of his wisdom and love, and the certain hopes of a better life. Impatience hath in it somewhat of atheism, or blasphemy : God is not duly acknowledged and honoured. Job's wife would have had him thus purposely provoke God, to end his misery by death : as if she had said, ' Speak no more well of him, by whom thou sufferest so much, nor honour a God that will not help thee : ' but patience saith, " I will look unto the Lord ; I will wait for the God of my salvation ; my God will hear me." (Mic. viii. 7.)

Impatience showeth a misunderstanding of God's dealing with the afflicted ; but patience yieldeth, because it understandeth whence all comes, and what will be the fruit and end. A man that is let blood for his life, is not impatient with the surgeon ; but a beast will strive, and a swine, or child, will cry.

Our burdens are heavy enough of themselves : impatience maketh them heavier, and is oft more painful than the thing which we suffer : some have gone mad with crosses, which to another would have been light. Patience is our cordial and *nepenthes*, yea, the health of the soul, by which it is able to bear its infirmities. " In our patience we possess our souls." (Luke xxi. 19.) Whatever else we lose, we lose not ourselves. He that keepeth his faith, and hope, and love by patience, keepeth his soul : but the impatient lose themselves, as if their other losses were not enough. A poor man singeth that gets his living only by his day labour ; when a lord or knight would be tormented with sorrow, if he were reduced to his degree. Striving under our yoke and burden maketh it gall the more : and we cannot so hopefully or comfortably pray for deliverance from the pain which we make ourselves, as from that which God layeth on us ; though also there, we must pray for the grace that must save us from our own impatience.

Patience preventeth many sins which impatience causeth ; hard

thoughts of God, if not hard and unseemly words: "Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly:" impatience tempteth men to think that piety and prayer are in vain, and to condemn the generation of the just, and to leave off duty, and say, 'Why should I wait on God any longer?' Yea, and to venture on false and sinful means, in hopes of deliverance and ease.

Were it to men, we have much to allay our impatience: but impatience against God hath no just excuse. Infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, can do nothing that deserveth blame: we have God's promise that all things shall work together for our good: and is he not to be trusted? Or is the means of our good to be accused?

Impatience is unseemly for them that believe that heavenly rest and glory are at hand; where all their pains and sorrows will end. Were a man on the rack, and were sure to have all that he desired after it, he would the more easily endure it. Why else did the martyrs so patiently suffer? It is incongruous to complain of any thing that brings a man to heaven.

Christ himself was innocent, and yet accused not God for his sufferings. But we suffer justly for our faults; and it is so much less than they deserve, that the sins which we suffer most for are said to be forgiven us, in that the everlasting punishment is forgiven: should we so often sinfully please the flesh, and yet must it not smart? Shall we so often grieve the Spirit of God, and not be grieved? Shall we lose our time, neglect our duty, forget our home, fall in love with the world, and yield to temptations, and defile our souls with filth and vanity, and must not correction tell us of our sinful folly? "If we suffer for our faults, and bear it patiently, it is not thankworthy." (1 Pet. ii. 20.)

Our merciful Father doth use to shame us for our impatience, by the blessed end of our afflictions. The end that God made with Job showed the reasonableness of his patience: when our afflictions are over, do not all believers see cause of thankfulness for them, and say, 'It is good for me that I was afflicted?' The pain is past, and the benefit remaineth. And if all that is past was mercy to us, why should we much fear that which is to come. Heaven will end all, and shame impatience for ever.

Our patience is much of our perseverance: what a deal of labour do those impatient men lose, that learn, and pray, and are somewhat religious, and have not patience at the last assault to bear the trial, but fail when they seemed to be near the crown!

Hold out, then, poor desponding soul! lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and run with patience the race which is set before thee, looking to Jesus, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross. God will not deceive thy hopes. Sin hath brought pain and death on man; but Christ hath sanctified it, and is the Lord of Life. Yet a little while, and the heavenly possession shall turn thy sorrows into everlasting joy, and thy moans and groans into thanks and praise, and there shall be no more sickness, pain, or death. O foolish, unbelieving hearts! that cry out of suffering, and fear deliverance; that would fain be free from all affliction, and yet fly from the only state of freedom; that are impatient under their calamity, and yet afraid of passing to the only rest!

Sect. 12. But it is neither pain alone, nor death alone, that will sufficiently try our strength, and exercise our faith and patience. It must be great pain (and often long) in order to a certain, expected death. These two conjunct were the case of Christ. The torment of his agony, scourging, crucifying, piercing, and desertion, and the certainty of death that followed. Great pains, with hopes of recovery and ease, may be borne, even by a worldly man; because there is still the worldly hope of better: and so there is no denial of all, while life itself is not denied. We must receive the sentence of death in ourselves, if we will find that we trust in God alone, and trust him as one that raiseth the dead, that is, for another and better life.

As long as a man hath any hope of life and ease, a man's faith is not tried to the uttermost, by actual forsaking all. And yet an easy death alone doth not fully try a man: for they that know that all must die, may submit to this, who cannot bear long pains before it. But great and long pains, and the sentence of death together, are the trial.

And if God will so try me, why should I repine? Flesh will groan, but the mind may obediently submit. It is but flesh; that flesh that hath tempted and imprisoned my soul. I have too much loved it, and am too loth to leave it: and is it not mercy from God to make me weary of it? God is engaged against idols, that is, all that is loved and pleased before him; and if any thing, that is likest to be this flesh. Its corruptibility tells us, that both its pleasure and its pain will be but short. Long pain is usually tolerable: and intolerable pain will conquer nature, and not be long. The grace of Christ is sufficient for us, and his strength is manifested in our weakness,

when he will not take the thorn out of our flesh, though, as Christ and Paul did, we pray thrice, or oftener.

And to be impatient with death is to repine that we are born mortal men ; and to fly from heaven and all true hopes, and all the felicity purchased by Christ: and is this renouncing the world, and trusting Christ for life everlasting? And why fear we that which endeth all our pains and fears? A true believer never suffereth so much, but his mercies are far more and greater than his sufferings. His soul is united to Christ: his hopes of heaven have a sure foundation: he is sealed up to glory: rest and joy are near at hand ; and former mercies should not be forgotten ; and should not such men patiently endure? O what a shameful contradiction is it, to choose heaven as our only portion, to believe in Christ for it, and to seek it as the business of all our lives, and yet to be loth to die, that we may obtain it, and to fly with fear from that which we so seek and hope for! What a contradiction is it to call God our God and Father, the God of Love, and to call Christ our gracious, glorified Redeemer, and to fly from his presence with distrustful fear! Almighty love may correct us, may kill us, but it cannot finally hurt true believers.

So much of Moses' and Elias' discourse of the sufferings and death of Christ.

Sect. 13. Sure it is not true that the souls of the fathers, before Christ's coming, did not enter into heaven, but lay in some inferior *limbus*. For Moses and Elias came from heaven; their shining glory showed that, and their discourse with Christ, and the voice and glory that went with them. And it is not to be thought that they were separated from the rest of the souls of the faithful, and, with Enoch, were in heaven by themselves alone, and the rest elsewhere. Though it is said that God's house hath many mansions, and there are various degrees of glory, yet the blessed are all fellow-citizens of one society, and children in one family of God. And they that came from east and west, shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God; and Lazarus is in Abraham's bosom, and the believing thief with Christ in paradise.

Sect. 14. It seems that Moses and Elias appeared thus, to foreshow the resurrection of Christ, and of the faithful, and to make it easier to the three disciples to believe it. Why should they doubt whether Christ should rise, when they saw that Moses was risen before him? And why should they doubt of

the resurrection of the faithful, and the glory following, when they saw these glorified saints? Some think that this apparition was for the strengthening of Christ himself, whose human nature had use for such ministry also of angels, but it is more certain that it was for the strengthening of the disciples' faith, and of ours by their testimony. As it is said, "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes." (John xii. 30.)

Sect. 15. It is much worth our noting, in what a communion this specimen of the kingdom of heaven was represented in the holy mount. Here was a voice of God, and a glimpse of his glory: here was our Redeemer in a glimpse of his glory: here was a Moses and Elias in a glimpse of their glory: and here were three beloved disciples yet in the flesh, and in weakness of faith, which needed such confirmation. God, our Father, and our Saviour, the saints of heaven, and those on earth, are all of one society or kingdom. There is a near relation, and a near communion among them all. When the eternal Word disdained not so wonderful condescension as to come to us in the form of a servant, even of a poor, despised, crucified man, it is less wonder that Moses and Elias should come down as his witnesses and servants. (Heb. xii. 23, &c.) The heavenly Jerusalem, and city of the living God, of which we are enrolled burgesses or heirs, hath many parts. There is the assembly of the first-born, and innumerable angels, and the Spirits of the just made perfect, and Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and God, the Judge of all. Oh, what holy, glorious, joyful company shall we have above! Christ and his angels will not despise the least of saints.

Sect. 16. But what was the introduction to this apparition and transfiguration? It was Christ's praying, "He went up into a mountain to pray, and, as he prayed, he was transfigured." (Luke ix. 28, 29.) Surely this is written to invite and encourage us to pray. We are in greater need than Christ. It is folly in unbelievers to think prayers vain, because God is unchangeable. We are not unchangeable: and the exercise of faith, dependence on God, and true desires, being the condition required in a due receiver, maketh those blessings become ours, which else we had been incapable of. God, who commandeth fervent prayer, hath promised to answer it. Though we must not think to be the rulers of the world, nor have whatever our flesh or folly doth desire, because we ask it earnestly, yet true prayer is the appointed way for obtaining what we need, and is

best for us, and we are fitted to receive. And as Christ had this wonderful return to his prayers, his servants have experience that their choicest mercies for soul and body have come this way.

Sect. 17. Though the three disciples were admitted to this glorious society, how different was their case from that of Christ, and Moses, and Elias! In the beginning of the heavenly concourse, they were asleep with heaviness, even while this glorious company stood near them. Alas! such is our infirmity in flesh, and such a clog are these earthly bodies to us, that when God is present, and heaven is before us, and we have the greatest cause to watch and pray, a heavy, weary, sluggish body, even fettereth an active spirit, and we sleep, or turn away in wandering thoughts, when we should seriously converse with Christ and heaven. Alas! what unworthy servants hath our Lord! Are such as these meet for his work, his love, his acceptance, or his kingdom? But oh, how merciful a Saviour have we, who taketh not his poor servants, at the worst, but when they have served him thus in his agony, he gently rebuketh them; "Could you not watch with me one hour?" and that with an excuse, "The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Sect. 18. It is a matter of great moment to understand in what cases this excuse will hold, and our weakness will not make the willingness of the Spirit unacceptable to God. If a drunkard, fornicator, or other sensualist should say, 'My spirit is willing to leave my sin, but my flesh is weak, and a temptation doth prevail,' *Video meliora proboque*; &c. This excuse would not prove God's forgiveness. If a man live in known sin, which he could forbear were he truly willing, and say, "To will is present with me, but to do I am unable; it is not I, but sin, that dwelleth in me;" this would be but a frivolous excuse, and yet to the sleepy disciples it was a good excuse, and I think to Paul, Rom. vii. Where, then, is the difference? There are some acts of man which the will hath not power to rule, and some that it can rule. The will hath not power always to keep a sleepy man awake: this sleep might be of the flesh without any will at all; and this excuseth from all guilt. There are some acts of man which the will cannot rule, but by a great degree of power and endeavour: as perhaps, with much ado, by preventing and resisting diligence, the disciples might have kept awake: in this case, their sleep is a fault, but a pardoned fault of weakness. Some persons are liable to inordinate fear and grief, which so surpriseth them by the constitution of their bodies,

that the greatest unwillingness would not hinder them. And some could do more to resist these passions than they do, but very hardly with the greatest diligence. These are accordingly excusable in degree. Paul would have perfectly obeyed God's law, and never have sinned. But there is no perfection in this life: mere imperfection of true grace, which is predominant in the will, doth not damn men. But there are acts which are so subject to the will, that a sincere will, though imperfect, can command them. He that doth these, (or doth the contrary,) it is not because he sincerely would, and cannot, but because he hath but ineffectual wishes, and is not sincerely willing, if he know them to be what they are; especially if they be materially great sins which he yieldeth to, which true grace more strongly resisteth than it doth an idle word, or thought, or action. In short, all omissions or commissions, in which the will is positively or privatively guilty, are sinful in some degree; but only these do damn the sinner, which are inconsistent with the predominant love of God, and heaven, and holiness, in the soul.

Sect. 19. When the disciples awaked, they saw these glorious ones in converse. Did they hear what they said, or did Christ after tell them? The latter is most probable. Doubtless, as Moses tells us how God made the world, which none could tell him but by God's telling them first, so the apostles have written many things of Christ which they neither saw nor heard, but from Christ, that told it them by word, or inspiration. How else knew they what Satan said and did to him in his temptations in the wilderness, and on the pinnacle of the temple? How knew they what his prayer was in his agony? And so in this instance also. But Christ's own testimony was enough to put them out of doubt, to them that daily saw his confirming miracles.

Sect. 20. How great a difference was there between mount Sinai and this mount? When God delivered the law to Moses, that mount was terrible in flame, and smoke, and thunder, so that the people trembled and fled: but now here is nothing but life, and light, and love from heaven. A merciful Redeemer, whose face shone as the sun, with heavenly company, appearing nearly to the disciples, pitying and bearing with their heaviness and infirmity, strengthening their faith and hope, and proving to them a resurrection, and a heavenly kingdom, by a visible apparition of some of its possessors. This was not a frightful, but a confirming, delectable sight: the law in terror was by Moses, but grace and truth, peace and pleasure, are by Christ.

This was an inviting and delighting, and not an affrighting, apparition. Was it not a shameful infirmity, and a sin, that Peter should deny Christ after such a sight as this, and the rest of the disciples forsake him and fly? What! after they had seen the kingdom of God come in power, and Christ's face shine as the sun in its brightness, could they forget all this? Or could they doubt whether he or his persecutors were the stronger, and liker to prevail at last? O, how frail, how uncertain, how bad a thing, is depraved man!

But though Christ found them asleep, and though he foreknew that they would forsake him, he forsook not them, nor used them as they deserved, but comforted them with a glimpse of heaven: for he died for his enemies.

Sect. 21. But this was but once in all the time of his abode among them. It was an extraordinary feast, and not their daily bread: they had Christ still with them, but not transfigured in glory, nor Moses and Elias in their sight. We are too apt to think, that if God give us a joyful, extraordinary glimpse of heaven, we must have it always, or that he forsaketh us, and casts us off when he denieth it us. O that we were as desirous of holiness and duty as we are of the joy which is the reward! But our Father, and not we, must be the chooser both of our food and feast. Moses did not dwell on mount Nebo, that he might still see the land of promise: it was enough to have one sight of it before his death. As flesh and blood cannot enter into heaven, so it is little of heaven that entereth into it.

Sect. 22. When the disciples awake, they see his glory, and the two men that stood with them. It must not be a sleeping but an awakened Christian, that will have a sight of heavenly glory. As we must love God with all the heart, and soul, and might, all must be awakened in seeking him, and in attending him, before we can have a joyful foretaste of his love. Carnal security, supine neglect, and dull contempt, are dispositions which render us incapable of such delights. Heavenly joy supposes a heavenly disposition and desires. Angels sleep not, nor are clogged with bodies of clay: earth hath no wings: it must be holy vivacity that must carry up a soul to God, notwithstanding the fetters of flesh. It is with each other's souls in the body that we converse together on earth. And it is not sluggish, but lively faith, and fervent desire, that must converse in heaven with Moses and Elias, and our living Head.

Sect. 23. But how did Peter know Moses and Elias, whom he

had never seen before? Perhaps glorified saints do bear each one his notifying signature, and need not names and sound of words to make them known: perhaps Christ told the disciples who they were that talked with him: perhaps he made them know it by inspiration, as the prophets have their knowledge. Any of these ways God could notify them: it is not needful that we know which of them it was; but that they were known, is certain. We shall be no strangers to any saints in heaven, and therefore not to our old acquaintance. Whether we shall have any greater love to them, or delight in them, for old acquaintance' sake, or because they were instruments of our good on earth, I know not, but I know that our love to them, with whom we had holy comfort on earth, may well render heaven more familiar to us now, and more suitable to our desires. O! how great a number of my godly friends are there! They are so many that I cannot make a catalogue of their names, but the memory of abundance of them doth delight me. And when we meet there, we shall be far better known to each other than we were to the most intimate on earth.

Oh, let Christians now so converse together, as remembering that they must meet in heaven, where all that was secret will be brought to light. If we now put on any vizor, and seem better than we are; if we hide any sin, or base corruption; if we, by fraud or falsehood deceive our friends, all this will be opened when we meet in heaven. It is a daily grief and shame to my soul, to think of the sins that I have committed against some that are now in heaven, which I either excused, extenuated, or hid, and to think how much evil they will know of me there, which on earth they knew not by me. But God, who pardoneth them, will cause his servants there to forgive each other; but the detected sin, for all that, will be an odious, shameful thing. Lying and hypocrisy are there no cloak, but an aggravation, of the shame. If we cannot confess, and take shame to ourselves, by repentance, upon earth, how shall we appear in the open light, and see the faces of those whom we have wronged. What diminution it will make of our joy, I know not, but it must needs be a dishonour to have been false to God or man, and especially when we meet where sin is perfectly hated, to think how we either sinned together, or that we tempted and ensnared one another in any sin; how it will affect us then I do not fully know, but it is now to me a far greater grief to think of any in heaven whom I have tempted or wronged, than it was

while they lived with me on earth. And I think there is somewhat of this nature common to good and bad: even the consciences of wicked men do haunt them for notable injuries to others, especially concealed ones, and especially for persecuting the servants of God, when they are dead, more than while they lived. Insomuch that (though I doubt not of real apparitions) I am ready to think, that some that say they are haunted by the sight and the voice of such as seem to them to be deceased persons, are rather haunted by their own consciences, which strongly represent those persons to their imaginations.

But on the other side, it is a great delight to me to think of the good which I received from many that are now in heaven. Of the profitable sermons which I have heard from some, and the profitable conversation which I have had with others: how oft we sweetly consulted together of the things which concern everlasting life: how many days in public and private we spent in preparation, and in some prospect of the blessedness which now they enjoy. And it is not a small mercy to me, that I can think of the multitudes now in heaven, of whose conversion and salvation God hath made my weak endeavours a prosperous means. O what a mercy is it to think on, that while I am yet compassed with temptations, and languishing in weakness, and groaning in pain, and, worst of all, burdened with a dark and sinful soul, so many are past all this with Christ, by means of any help which he sent them by my labours. It hath oft humbled me greatly to read in the lives of such men as John Janeway and Joseph Allen, how much of their proficiency they ascribed to my writings, and how far they overwent me, and left me quite behind them in holy delights and praises of God! But how much more am I below a multitude now in heaven, who called me father here on earth!

And if here I must rejoice with them that rejoice, as well as mourn with them that mourn, why should I not much more rejoice with all the blessed society above; and more familiarly with my old acquaintance, pupils, and dear friends? My love should be most to the best; and therefore, more to them than to any other of my friends; and therefore, my union with them being closer, and their felicity far greater, I should think with more joy of them than of any left behind. They are safe in the harbour, past all our dangerous storms and waves; and though they know, or will know, more of my sins than they did

on earth, and hate them more, yet they that feel the comfort of the pardon of their own, will imitate God in pardoning me, and rejoice in God's forgiveness of me. Though their vile bodies lie like common dust, how much better do they now know the love of God, the mysteries of grace, the heavenly glory, the state of spirits in the city of God, than I do who was wont to preach it to them. God, that sent down Moses and Elias to show that saints in heaven and on earth have communion, will bring me and my friends now in heaven together again, into a far sweeter communion than ever we had here.

Sect. 24. It is no great wonder that Peter should be transported with this glorious sight ; and greatly delighted with this heavenly communion, and say, " Master it is good for us to be here." Would not a sight, a glimpse, of heaven, have transported any holy soul; yea, even those that now lie in tears and fears, and are overwhelmed with doubts and troubles? When they are groping after God, and groaning on their knees, because they feel more of his frowns than of his love, if then they had such a sight as this, what a change would it make upon them? Perhaps you will say, that the doubt of their own sincerity might still deprive them of their joy. No; this sight would banish doubts and troubles. It is a communication of love, and such as will fully convince the communicants.

Without such a miraculous glimpse of glory, God sometime giveth some of his servants such a mental illustration, and inward glimpse and taste of heaven, as greatly overcometh all the fears of pain and death; such many old and later martyrs have had. It was a strange word of the godly Bishop of St David's, Mr. Farrar, to his neighbours, ' If I stir in the fire, believe not my doctrine :' and accordingly he stirred not. If he had not had some prophetic inspiration, this could not have been justified from being a presumptuous tempting of God. And Mr. Baynam's case was a mere wonder, who, in the flames, called to the papists to see a miracle, professing to them, that in the fire he felt no more pain than if he had been laid on a bed of down, or roses.

I am just now reading in Melch. Adam's Lives of the German Philosophers, the Life of Olympia Fulvia Morata, which ended with some such experience. In many ages there hath been some one rare woman, who hath excelled men in the languages,

philosophy, and other human learning. Such an one was this Olympia Fulvia Morata, of Ferrara. She married Andr. Gundler, a physician: she removed with him into Germany; and was by the way convinced of the guard of angels, by her young brother falling out of a high window, on cragged stones, without any more hurt than if it had been on the soft ground. In Germany, she thus wrote to Anna Estensis, a Guisian princess: 'As soon as, by the singular goodness of God, I was departed from the Italian idolatry, and came with my husband into Germany, it is incredible how God changed my soul, (or mind,) which, being formerly most averse (or abhorring) to the divine Scriptures, am now delighted in them alone, and place in them all my study, labour, care, and mind; and, as much as possible, contemn all the riches, honours, and pleasures, which formerly I was wont to admire.' But the cross presently following, in God's usual method, her husband and she were, by soldiers, stripped naked, save the shift next the body, and narrowly escaping with life, were put so to wander from place to place, none daring to entertain them, even when she was sick of a fever; till at last they found liberal entertainment, in which she shortly fell into a mortal disease, of which she died. And in her last sickness, and after much torment of body, near death, she pleasantly smiled. Her husband asked her the cause; who said, 'I saw a certain place which was full of a most clear and beauteous light;' intimating that she should quickly be there, and saying, 'I am wholly full of joy.' And spake no more till, her eyesight failing her, she said, 'I scarce know any of you any more; but all things else about seem to be full of most beauteous flowers;' which were her last words; having a long time professed, that nothing seemed more desirable to her, than to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, in all her sickness magnifying his mercies to her.

Many have thus joyfully laid down the flesh to go to Christ; what wonder, then, if Peter was loth to lose the pleasure of what he saw.

Two things are necessary to great and solid joy; first, that the object be truly and greatly amiable, and delectable; and, secondly, that the apprehensions of it be clear and strong. As to the first, we have so great and glorious things to delight us as would feast our souls with constant joy, were not the second, alas! much wanting. What man could choose but be even in Peter's rapture continually, if he had but ascertained heavenly

glory, apprehended by him, in as satisfactory a manner as these sensible things are? If I lay in prison, yea, or in torment of cholic, stone, or any such disease, and had but withal such apprehensions, or sight, of assured glory, surely the pain would not be able to suppress my joy. What a mixture, what a discord, would there be in my expressions; torment would constrain my flesh to groan, and the sight of heaven would make me triumph. I cannot but think how this great discord would show the difference between the spirit and the flesh. What a strange thing it would be to hear the same man, at the same time, crying out in pain with groans, and magnifying the love of God with transporting joy! But we are not yet fit for such joyful apprehensions; our weak eyes must not see the sun, but through the allaying medium of a humid air, at a vast distance, and by the chrystalline humour, and organical parts of the eye. Fain we would get nearer, and have sight, or clearer apprehensions, of the spiritual society, and glorious world. We study, we pray, we look up, we groan under our distance, darkness, and unsatisfying conceptions; but yet it must not be. We must be ripened before the shell will break, or the dark womb will deliver us up to the glorious light; but Christ vouchsafed that to his three apostles which we are unworthy of, and yet unfit for. O happy sight! O happy men! It is incongruous to say, 'What would I not give for such a sight?' lest it should savour of Simon Magus' folly; and I have nothing to give; but it is not incongruous to say, 'What would I not do; and what would I not suffer for such a sight?' Yea, Christ puts such kind of questions to us; O that I had better answered them in the hour of duty, and in the hour of temptation! When he asked, "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptised with the baptism, that I am baptised with?" I have been ready, with James and John, to say, I can; but when the trial comes, (as they after in his suffering forsook him and fled,) how insufficient is my own strength to perform my promise? When he did impose on me the denying of myself, forsaking all, taking up the cross and following him, I yielded and covenanted by vow to do it; but it was by the help of the Holy Spirit, which he promised to give me. I stand, Lord, to my covenant; help me to perform it; and give me, though not his present sight, yet some of Peter's mental apprehensions, and a glimpse, a taste, of that which transported him with delight. Let who will (or who thou wilt) take the riches and grandeur

of the world. O give me some delightful taste of that which I am made for, redeemed for, and which thy Spirit hath long taught me to seek and hope for, as my all!

Sect. 25. Peter was not weary with the sight of this heavenly apparition. Why should I be weary of the believing contemplation of greater things? Though sight affect us more sensibly than mere believing and thinking, yet these have their happy office, which may be effectual. And Christ, who thus appeared in glory to Peter, hath said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." And Peter himself saith of them that see not Christ, that "They rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory," in believing. O how unexcusable am I for every weary prayer or meditation of such a glory; and for yielding to Satan and a backward heart, which have oft made me shorten these sweet employments, when I had time, and leave, and need, to lengthen them. What! weary of communion with Christ! weary of speaking to my heavenly Father, for endless blessedness, upon such joyful terms of hope as he hath given me! weary of the thoughts of the city of God, the heavenly society, and work! weary of exciting divine love, and exercising it in divine praise, which are the works of angels, and all the heavenly host! Oh, how justly might God be, as it were, weary of me, and of my weary services; yea, of the best that I can offer him, which hath in it so much to give him cause!

Sect. 26. Peter did not fly from this glorious prospect; but would fain have had more of it, and have dwelt upon the holy mount. And when God will call me to a more glorious vision and fruition in heaven, shall I draw back, and be unwilling to go? Was that mount a better place than heaven? Is not Christ now to be there seen in greater glory? Is the Jerusalem above, the glorious company of saints and angels, no better and more desirable a sight, than Moses and Elias were on the mount? Alas! when we have read, and heard, and thought, and talked so much of heaven, and done and suffered so much for it, that yet we should draw back with fear and unwillingness to go to it! O what lamentable weakness of faith, and power of flesh, doth this discover! When I read Peter's words "It is good to be here," I am grieved that I, who dwell in a world so near like hell, among the implacable haters of holiness and holy peace, and in a painful, tired body, and who have thought, said, and written so much of heaven, do yet say, with

no stronger desire and joy, "It is good to be there." When I see all natural appetites desire earnestly their proper food, and even the brutes desire their beloved company, shall my holy appetite be so dull and indifferent? Lord, quicken it by the fuller communications of thy Spirit, and save me from this hated, dangerous disease.

Sect. 27. But Peter spake he knew not what, when he talked of building tabernacles on earth, for the fruition of that which is proper to heaven. Alas! this is our common malady and folly: we would have Christ in the splendour of his glory; but we would have him here: we would see Moses and Elias, if they will come down to us: we would have that in the flesh, which flesh and blood cannot possess. O if we knew in what land, what city, what country, what private house, we might live in the least glimpse of the heavenly glory, how joyfully should we run to such an habitation! Merchants make towards the most gainful place for trade: poor men inquire after the most fertile and delectable countries for plantation: gentlemen delight themselves with a sweet and pleasantly-seated mansion; but if saints on earth could find a place where they could see what Stephen, or Paul, or the apostles saw, and have a little of heaven without dying and putting off this body, what a desirable dwelling would that seem to them? And yet, alas, how cold are our desires of the time and place where we shall have much more! We have Christ on earth, in the manner and measure that we are capable: we have here some communion with heaven, as verily (though not so sensibly) as our eye hath with the sun. God will not deny believers their title, their earnest, and some first-fruits; but when we would have our all, or our best on earth, or that on earth which is proper to heaven, we know not what we desire or say.

Are we, vile, dirty sinners in flesh, now fit for heavenly sights or joys? Or is this world a place for building tabernacles, where we may see the Lord, and take up our rest? What! in a world of temptations, of wickedness, of sufferings, where we are daily wrestling for our lives, and fighting, not merely against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, even spiritual wickedness (or wicked spirits) in high places (above the greatest men that are their servants). (Eph. vi. 12.) But that which is of the earth is earthly. Our earthly part would have an earthly felicity; but when we know that it is corruptible, and a dying

thing, and that we have here no continuing city, both faith and reason bid us seek for one to come. The unfaithful steward had so much wit as to make sure of another habitation, when he knew that he must be no longer steward.

God hath so constantly confuted and befooled me, by his marvellous providence, whenever I have said, 'Soul take thy ease,' and have thought of building tabernacles on earth, as hath convinced me, that such folly is not the least part of the danger of a soul, from which his mercy did so watchfully save me. If a little health and ease, or a pleasant habitation, or beloved company and friends, have but flattered me into earthly delight and hopes, and made me say, "It is good to be here;" I never was long without some pains, and dangerous sickness, or some loss or cross in friends, or some removal by personal or public changes, to tell me, that I knew not what I said, and that rest and happiness are not here. As the laborious ants and bees are long gathering a heap of treasure, and furnishing a hive with winter provisions, and a contemptuous foot soon spurneth about the one, and the chief owner of the hive destroyeth the other; so (while I neglected wealth and honour) when I have but treasured up the choicest books, and taken pleasure in my works and friends, God saw that such pleasure needed an allay, and hath taken away books and friends together, or driven me oft from them and my habitation, to tell me, sensibly, that I have higher to look, and further to go; and that Moses and Elias appeared not to turn earth into heaven, and make me think that now I am well, but to invite my soul to their celestial habitation. When Christ hath comforted me by hearing prayers, by great deliverances, by wonderful success of my defective labours, by comfortable friends, by public mercies, it was not, by making my condition pleasant, to keep down my desires from heaven, but to draw them thither by such foretastes. Contentment with our condition, as without more of the world, is a great duty; but to be content with the world, or any thing on earth, without more holiness and communion with God, and without a part in the heavenly perfection, is a heinous and pernicious sin.

But, alas! it is a far worse mistake than Peter's, which deceiveth the greatest part of men. They say, indeed, as he, "It is good to be here," (till melancholy or misery make them intolerable to themselves,) but it is not because they have seen a glimpse of heaven on earth, or tasted the sweetness of

the holy society and work, but because their bodies are in health, their purses full, their appetites pleased, and their inferiors do their wills, and honour them. This is all the heaven that they love; and, to leave all this is the death which they abhor and fear. And they will not hear God, and the experience of all mankind befooling them, till near the night that their souls shall be required, and then, whose will all their treasure be?

Sect. 28. But yet it was a greater part of Peter's dotage, to think of tabernacles for Christ, Moses, and Elias, and of detaining of heavenly inhabitants upon earth. If you would offer the lowest saint in heaven an earthly kingdom in exchange for his condition, with what disdain would he despise the offer? Christ's kingdom was not of this world, nor would Moses and Elias change their lot with Alexander or Cæsar. Poor trifles allure us, and seem somewhat to us (as toys to children) while we are dreaming in the flesh; but if once we be delivered, and see what the celestial glory is, what a change will it make upon our judgments? We fear now in the dark to go unto that world of light, and are loth to put off the rags of flesh, and to depart from a known, though a dirty, falling habitation: but if we get to heaven, we shall be loth to return to earth again, and be so coarsely clothed: when once we are there, a world would not hire us to come back into this corruptible body, till God will make it spiritual and incorruptible. Our friends, whose deaths we passionately lamented, would be loth now to change their company for such as we are, or their abode for such a wicked world as this, or their work for the best of ours on earth: no wonder that departed souls appear not to their friends on earth: most apparitions are of devils, or miserable souls, to whom it is no loss or condescension. Were I once in heaven, could I possibly be willing to be turned again into a Bedlam world, and laid under the feet of blinded pride, and raging madness, and live among Sodomites (called Christians) whose God is their belly, and who glory in their filthiness and shame, and mind nothing, with love, but earthly things; and are bitter enemies, not only to the cross, but to the government of Christ? Would I be again among dogs and swine; yea, devils in flesh, who hate and persecute the regenerate seed, and all that will not receive their mark, and be as mad and bad as they? Would I again be groaning here in pain, or tired with a weary body, and more with a feeble, sinful soul, weak in faith, cold in love, of doubtful hope, and imperfect duty? Would I be here again in

the prospect of a grave, with fear of dying; as strange as now to the heavenly felicity? Lazarus will not come from Abraham's bosom, for the rich man's wealth and belly-pleasure, no, not to warn his sensual brethren. Had Peter seen heaven as he saw the glory on the mount, he would never have made so blind a motion for Christ, Moses, and Elias, to continue there, who have so much better a habitation.

Sect. 29. But this glorious apparition was but short: as the glory of God's back parts to Moses, which did but pass by. Presently a cloud cometh, and separateth the company, and ends the pleasant sight. When Christians receive some extraordinary sense of the love of God, some sweet foretastes of promised happiness, they must not look that this should be ordinary, or always so. When some fervent prayer is extraordinarily answered, and a sacrament sweetened with unusual drops of heavenly sweetness, or a holy discourse or meditation hath raised us higher than ever before, we must not expect that this should be our constant diet, and God should thus feast us all the year. The times of fasting also have their turn. Moses did not dwell on Mount Horeb, nor Mount Nebo or Pisgah, from whence he saw the Land of Promise. God's children do not always laugh and sing; while they have their sinning times, they will have their suffering and crying times. How suddenly doth the lark come down to the earth, who before was soaring out of sight, and singing pleasantly in the higher air, as if it had been aspiring towards the sun. A luscious diet is not best for such as we, that have so many corruptions to be cured by cleansing means: cordials must not be all our physic; unwarrantable expectations of greater or more continued joys than we are meet for is injurious both to God and to ourselves. Desires of more we may and must have: but those desires must look up to heaven, where, indeed, they may be satisfied.

30. The joy of these spectators was turned into fear (saith the text) when they entered into the cloud. No wonder: the change was sudden and great; from a sight of the kingdom of God in power unto a dark cloud. Just now they seemed almost in heaven, and presently they knew not where they were: from glorious light to a kind of prison of obscurity.

Such changes here we are liable to. The same soul that lately tasted of transporting joy, may lie in terror, hardly resisting temptations to despair. The same person that was confident of the love of God, may be quickly, not only doubting of it,

but sinfully denying it : the same that had assuring evidence of sincerity, may shortly conclude that all was but hypocrisy. The same that was triumphing in the sense of love, may cry out, O miserable man that I am ! And the same that magnified the grace of Christ, may say, the day of grace is past ; especially if either the tempter get the advantage of a melancholy body, or of casting the soul into renewed guilt of some wounding sin, or into impatient discontents, with the things that befall it in the world.

There is a stability in the essentials of holiness : it is life eternal that is here begun : but, alas ! the degrees of grace, the exercise of it, the evenness and integrity of our obedience, and accordingly our comforts, are lamentably liable to change : even as all worldly things are mutable to the ungodly, though their hardened hearts are too little changeable. Expecting nothing but joy from God, or expecting more than we are meet for, maketh our dejections the greater, and more grievous. None are cast lower with terror, trouble, and almost despair, than some that have been most transported with joy : when some other Christians of an even conversation have an evenness and constancy of holy peace, though no such joys.

Sect. 31. The cloud separated the company ; Moses and Elias are seen no more ; no, nor the glory of Christ : but yet Christ is not separated from them : his ordinary presence still abideth with them. Christ doth not leave the soul when extraordinary joys do leave it : it loseth not his saving grace, nor the presence of his Spirit, as oft as it loseth heavenly delight. Desire showeth love to him, and to his holiness : and he never forsaketh those that love him : as long as the soul breatheth after Christ, and after more communion with God, and, conscious of its imperfection, would fain be perfect, and resolveth to continue waiting for increase of faith and holiness in the use of the means which Christ hath appointed, it is not forsaken. Christ, by his Spirit, dwelleth and worketh in that soul. It may enter into a cloud, and Christ may be unseen, and seem quite lost, but the cloud will vanish, and he will appear ; and he will first find us, that we may seek and find him. If he appear to us but as in his humiliation, and as crucified, and thereby humble us, and crucify us to the world and the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof, and cause us but to seek first his kingdom and righteousness, he will raise us higher, and show us his glory, when grace, and conquest, and perseverance have pre-

pared us : we are in a cloudy world and body ; and our sins are yet a thicker cloud between God's glorious face and us : but as God is God, and heaven is heaven, so Christ is Christ, and grace is grace, when we see it not, but fear that we are undone, and entering into outer darkness : and at sun-rising, all our darkness, and all our doubts and fears will vanish.

Sect. 32. "There came a voice out of the cloud, this is my beloved Son ; hear him." (Luke ix. 15.) Had I heard such a testimony from heaven, would it not have set my faith above all doubts and unbelief? For the voice that thus owned Christ and his word, might embolden me fully to trust all his promises, as it bindeth me to obey his precepts.

God's love is effective and communicative ; and as his life and light cause life and light, so his love causeth love ; and Christ, that is called his beloved Son, is likest him in love ; none loveth us so much as God our Father, and his beloved Son, who is also as God, essential love. And shall I think with cold or little love of such a God, and such a Saviour? It is as unreasonable to fly from God or Christ, as fearing that he wanteth love to a capable soul, as to fly from the sun, as wanting heat or light. Oh, what an unruly, froward thing is the corrupted soul of man ! When we think of God's judgment, and how we are in his hands, as to all our hopes, for soul and body, we fear, and are uncomfortable, lest he have not so much love and mercy as should cause us confidently to trust him : we could trust some friends with life and soul were we in their power ; but infinite love itself, and a loving Saviour, we can hardly trust, so far as to quiet us in pain or death. And yet when Christ, to cure this distrust, hath manifested his love by the greatest miracles that ever God showed to mortal men, even by Christ's incarnation, his life, his works, his death, resurrection, intercession, and the advancement of human nature in him above angels, the greatness of this incomprehensible love occasioneth the difficulty of our believing it ; as if it were too great and wonderful to be credible : thus dark and guilty sinners hardly believe our Father's love, whether it be expressed by ordinary, or by the most wonderful effects.

Sect. 33. As Christ is called the Son of God, so also are all his members : we have so far the same title, that we might partake of the same comforts : he is God's only Son by eternal generation ; and the hypostatical union upon his miraculous conception : but through him we are sons by regeneration and

adoption. And shall not the love of such a Father be trusted, and the presence and pleasing of such a Father be desired? If Manoah's wife could say, "If he would have killed us, he would not have accepted a sacrifice of us;" I may say, if he would have damned me, or forsaken my departing soul, he would not have adopted me, nor made and called me his Son. Christ was made his incarnate son, that we might be made his adopted sons: and we are made his adopted sons, for the sake, and by the grace, of Christ, his natural Son.

Sect. 34. The command, "hear him," is relative, as to Moses and Elias: 1. Hear him whom the law and the prophets typified and foretold, and were his servants, and preparatory instructors, to lead us to him. 2. Hear him before Moses and the prophets, where his coming and covenant abrogateth the law of Moses, and as a greater light, he obscureth the less: he hath revealed more than they revealed; and, the same more clearly: life and immortality is more fully brought to light by him: his gospel is as the heart of the Holy Bible: we use the Old Testament books, especially as the witnesses of Christ.

Sect. 35. And whom shall we hear so willingly, so obediently, as Christ? Abraham sent not Dives's brethren to the king, or to the high-priest, to know what religion he should choose, or what he should do to escape hell torments; but it was Moses and the prophets that they must hear. But God, from heaven, hath sent us yet a better teacher, and commanded us to hear him: Moses was faithful in God's house as a servant, but Christ as a Son: his authority is above kings and high priests; and they have no power now but from him; and therefore none against him or his laws: all commands are null to conscience which contradict him: the examples in Daniel iii. and vi., and of the Apostles, tell us, whether God or man should be first obeyed: therefore it is that the Bible is more necessary to be searched and learned than the statute-book, or canons: were man to be heard before Christ, or against him, or as necessarily as he, why have we not law-preachers every Lord's-day to expound the statutes and canons to all the people? And why are they not catechised out of the book of canons, or law, as well as out of the Bible.

And sure if we must hear Christ and his gospel before priests or princes, or before our dearest friends, much more before our fleshly lusts and appetites, and before a profane and foolish scorner, and before the temptations of the devil. O had we

heard Christ warning us, when we hearkened to the tempter, and to the flesh, how safely had we lived, and how comfortably might we have died !

Sect. 36. But this word, "hear him," is as comfortable as obligatory. Hear him, sinner, when he calls to thee to repent and turn to God : hear him when he calleth thee to himself, to take him for thy Lord and Saviour, to believe and trust him for pardon and salvation : hear him, when he calleth, "Come to me all ye that are weary and heavy laden : ho, every one that thirsteth come : whoever will, let him drink of the water of life freely." Hear him when he commandeth, and hear him when he promiseth ; and hear him before the worldly wise, when he teacheth us the way to God : hear him, for he knows what he saith : hear him, for he is true, and faithful, and infallible : hear him, for he is the Son of God, the greatest messenger that ever God sent : hear him, for he purposely came down in flesh, that he might familiarly teach us : hear him, for none else in the world hath made known the things of God like him, and none can do it : hear him, for he meaneth us no hurt : he is our dearest friend, and love itself, and saith nothing but for our salvation, and promiseth nothing but what he will perform. Yea, hear him, for every soul that will not hear him shall be cut off.

Hear him, therefore, if he contradict thy fleshly appetite ; hear him, if great or small, if any or all shall be against it : hear him, if he set thee on the hardest work, or call thee to the greatest suffering : hear him, if he bid thee take up the cross, and forsake all and follow him, in hope of a reward in heaven : hear him, if he call thee to lay down thy life ; for none can be a loser by him.

Hear him now in the day of grace, and he will hear thee in the day of thy extremity, in the day of danger, sickness, death, and judgment, when the world forsaketh thee, and no one's hearing else can help thee.

Sect. 37. But, 'I was not one that saw this vision : had I seen it myself it would have satisfied me, and confuted all my doubts.' Answ. But it is the will of God that the ministry and testimony of men shall be a means of our believing : it is faith, and not sight, that must be the ordinary way of our salvation ; else Christ must have showed himself, and his miracles, resurrection, and ascension, to every one in the world that must be-

lieve in him : and then he must have been visible at once in every kingdom, parish, and place on earth, and continued so to the end of the world ; and must have died, risen, and ascended many millions of times, and in every place. They that will put such laws on their law-giver before they will believe in him, must be saved without him, and against him, if they can. This is more unreasonable than to tell God that you will not believe that there is a heaven or hell unless you see them. But God will have us live, and be saved by believing, and not by sight. And he will use man for the instruction and salvation of man, and not send angels with every message.

Sect. 38. But why did Christ show this vision but to three of his disciples ? Answ. He is not bound to tell us why : but we may know that a sight of heavenly glory is not to be ordinarily expected on earth. Why did God show the back parts of his glory to none but Moses, no, not to his brother Aaron ? Why did he speak to him only in the bush, and on the mount ? Why did he translate none to heaven without dying but Enoch and Elias ? Why did he save but Noah, and seven with him, in the ark ? These are not things ordinary, nor to be common to many.

Sect 39. But by this it appeareth, that even among his twelve apostles Christ made a difference, and preferred some before the rest ; though he set no one over the rest in any governing authority, yet some of them were qualified above the rest, and esteemed, and used by him accordingly. Peter is called the first, and, it seems, was qualified above the rest, by his more frequent speaking and familiarity with Christ, and his speeches and miracles after the resurrection ; though yet the faction that said, " I am of Cephas," or " I am of Paul," was rebuked as carnal ; so far was Christ from directing the churches to end all difference by obeying Peter as their supreme ruler. James and John are called the sons of thunder : they had some more eminent qualification than the rest ; so that James was the first martyred apostle, and John the disciple whom Jesus specially loved. Ministers of the same office and order may much differ in gifts and grace, in labour and success, and in God's acceptance and reward, and in the church's just esteem and love. All pastors were not such as Cyprian, Basil, Gregory, Nazianzen, Chrysostom, or Augustin. And the rest must not envy at the preference of Peter, James, and John. Andrew seems to be Peter's elder brother, and knew Christ before him ; as Aaron was elder

brother to Moses, and yet must give God leave to choose to give pre-eminence to whom he will.

Sect. 40. But why did not these three apostles tell any of this vision till after Christ's resurrection? Answ. Christ did forbid it them. And it is according to the method of his revelation. He would make himself known to the world by degrees; and more by his works than by mere words; and these works were to be finished, and all set together, to be his convincing witness to the world. And the chief of these were his resurrection, ascension, and sending down the Holy Ghost: the apostles could not say till then, 'Jesus is risen, ascended, and hath given us the seal of the Spirit; therefore he is the Son of God.' Christ first preached repentance like John Baptist; and next he told them that the kingdom of God (by the Messiah) was come, and was among them; and then he taught them to believe his word to be sent from God, and to be true; and he taught them the doctrines of holiness, love, and righteousness towards men: and he wrought those miracles which might convince them that what he said, or should say, deserved their belief; but yet before his resurrection, his apostles themselves understood not many of the articles of our creed; they knew not that Christ was to die for sin, and so to redeem the world by his sacrifice, nor that he was to rise, ascend, and reign, and intercede in glory; and yet they were then in a state of grace and life, such as believers were in before Christ's incarnation. And sure no more is required of the nations that cannot hear the gospel.

But the resurrection was the beginning of the proper gospel state, and kingdom, to which all before was but preparatory; and then, by the Spirit, Christianity was formed to its settled consistence, and is a known, unalterable thing.

And it is a great confirmation to our faith, that Christ's kingdom was not settled by any advantage of his personal presence, preaching, and persuasion, so much as by the Holy Ghost in his apostles and disciples, when he was gone from them into heaven.

Sect. 41. But how are we sure that these three men tell us nothing but the truth? Answ. This is oft answered elsewhere. The Spirit which they spake and worked by was Christ's witness and theirs. They healed the sick, raised the dead, spake various languages which they never learned; and preached and recorded that holy doctrine committed to them by Christ, which itself contained the evidence of its divinity, and of their truth;

and Christ then and to this day hath owned it, by the sanctifying efficacy of the same Spirit, upon millions of souls.

How holy a doctrine hath Peter himself delivered, as confirmed by his apparition! "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty; for he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased; and this voice which came from heaven, we heard when we were with him in the holy mount." (2 Peter i. 16—18.) The words "in whom I am well pleased," are only here and in Matthew; Mark and Luke omitting them, tell us, that the evangelists undertook not to recite all that was said and done, but each one so much as seemed necessary for him to say.

Sect. 42. And now what remaineth, O my soul, but that thou take in the due impression of this apparition of the glory of Jesus and his saints; and that thou joyfully obey this heavenly voice, and hear the beloved Son of God, in whom the Father is well pleased?

I. As we that are born in another age and land must know what Christ said, by the transmission and certain testimony of them that heard him, infallible tradition, by act, word, and record, being our way of notice, as immediate sensation was theirs, so even the glorious apparition itself may, by the mediation of their infallible record, be partly transmitted to our imagination. An incorporate soul is so used to a mixed way of knowing by imagined ideas received by sense, that it would fain have such a sort of knowledge of separated souls, and other spirits, and of their glorious state and place, and work, and is hardly fully satisfied without it: seeing Christ hath partly condescended to this our culpable weakness, lose not the help of his condescension. Let this clear description of the heavenly sight make it to thee partly as if thou hadst been one of the three spectators; till thou canst say, 'Methinks I almost see the face of Christ shine as the sun, and his raiment whiter than the snow; and Moses and Elias (no doubt, in some degree of glory) standing with him;' methinks I almost hear them discoursing of Christ's death, and man's redemption: and by this sight I partly conceive of the unseen heavenly company and state; methinks I see the cloud receive them, when Peter had been transported with the sight; and I almost feel his pleasant raptures, and am ready

to say, as if I had been with him, "It is good for us to be here;" methinks I almost hear the heavenly voice, "This is my beloved Son, hear him." And shall I yet doubt of the celestial society and glory? Had I once seen that, what a sense would it have left upon my heart, of the difference between earth and heaven, man and God, flesh and spirit, sin and duty! How thankfully should I have thought of the work of redemption and sanctification?

And why may I not accordingly put myself as into the case of them who saw all Christ's miracles, and saw him risen, and ascend towards heaven? or, at least, of all those ordinary Christians who saw all the wonders done by the reporters of these things? I can easily receive a pleasing idea of some foreign, happy country, which a traveller describeth to me, though I never saw it; and my reason can partly gather what great things are, if I see, but lesser of the same kind, or somewhat like them. A candle showeth somewhat by which we may conceive of the greatest flame. Even grace and gracious actions do somewhat notify to us the state of glory; but the sight on the mount did more sensibly notify it.

Think not, then, that heavenly contemplation is an impossible thing, or a mere dream, as if it had no conceivable subject-matter to work upon: the visible things of earth are the shadows, the cobwebs, the bubbles, the shows, mummeries, and masks: and it is loving them, and rejoicing and trusting in them, that is the dream and dotage. Our heavenly thoughts, and hopes, and business, are more in comparison of these than the sun is to a glow-worm, or the world to a mole-hill, or governing an empire to the motions of a fly. And can I make somewhat, yea, too much, of these almost nothings; and yet shall I make almost nothing of the active, glorious, unseen world; and doubt and grope in my meditations of it, as if I had no substance to apprehend? If invisibility to mortals were a cause of doubting, or of unaffecting, unsatisfying thoughts, God himself, who is all to men and angels, would be as no God to us, and heaven as no heaven, and Christ as no Christ, and our souls, which are ourselves, would seem as nothing to themselves; and all men would be as no men to us, and we should converse only with carcasses and clothes.

Lord shine into this soul with such an heavenly, potent, quickening light, as may give me more lively and powerful conceptions of that which is all my hope and life! Leave me not to the exercise of art alone, in barren notions; but make it as

natural to me to love thee, and breathe after thee: thou teachest the young ones both of men and brutes to seek to the dam for food and shelter: and though grace be not a brutish principle, but works by reason, it hath its nature and inclining force; and tendeth towards its original, as its end. Let not thy soul be destitute of that holy sense and appetite, which the divine and heavenly nature doth contain. Let me not lay more stress and trust upon my own sight and sense, than on the sight and fidelity of my God, and my Redeemer. I am not so foolish as to live, as if this earth were no bigger than the little of it which I see: let me not be so much more foolish as to think of the vast and glorious regions, and the blessed inhabitants thereof, and the receptacles of justified souls, as if they wanted either substantiality or certainty, to exercise a heavenly conversation here, and to feast believing souls with joy, and draw forth well-grounded and earnest desire to “depart and be with Christ.”

Sect. 43. II. Hear then, and hear with trust and joy, the tidings and promises of him whom the voice from heaven commanded man to hear. He is the glorified Lord of heaven and earth: all is in his power. He hath told us nothing but what he knew, and promised nothing but what he is able and willing to give. Two sorts of things he hath required us to trust him for: things notified by express, particular promises, and things only generally promised and known to us.

1. We may know particularly that he will receive our departing souls, and justify them in judgment, and raise the dead, and all the rest particularly promised. And we know, in general, that we have a heavenly city and inheritance, and shall see God, and be with Christ in everlasting happiness, loving and praising God with joy in the perfected, glorious church of Christ. All this, therefore, we must explicitly believe. But it is little that we know distinctly of the consistence and operations of spirits and separated souls, as to a formal or modal conception; a great deal about the place, state, and mode, their acting, and fruition, is dark to us; but none of it is dark to Christ: here, therefore, an implicit trust should not only bind and stop our selfish and over-bold inquiries, but also quiet and comfort the soul, as well as if ourselves knew all.

O my soul, abhor and mortify thy selfish trust, and unbelieving thirst to have that knowledge of good and evil thyself, which is the prerogative of thy Lord and Saviour. This was the sin that first defiled human nature, and brought calamity on the

world. God hath set thee enough to learn; know that, and thou knowest enough. If more were possible, it would be a perplexity and a snare, and he that increaseth such knowledge would increase sorrow: but when it is both unprofitable and impossible, what a sin and folly is it to waste our time, and tire and deceive our minds, in long and troublesome searches after it; and then disquietly to murmur at God, and the holy Scripture, and die with sad, distrustful fears, because we attain it not: when all this while we should have understood, that this part of knowledge belongs to Christ, and the heavenly society, and not to sinful mortals here; and that we have without it as much as may cause us to live and die in holiness, safety, peace, and joy, if we can but trust him who knoweth for us. Christ perfectly knoweth what spirits are, and how they act, and whether they have any corporeal organ, or vehicle, or none; and what is the difference between Enoch and Elias, and those that left their bodies here, and what a resurrection will add to souls, and how it will be wrought, and when; and what is meant by the thousand years' previous reign; and who they be that shall dwell in the new earth, and how it will be renewed. All the dark passages of Scripture and providence he can perfectly resolve: he knoweth why God leaveth the far greatest part of the world in Satan's slavery, darkness, and wickedness, and chooseth so few to real holiness: and why he maketh not men such as he commandeth them to be: and why he leaveth serious Christians to so much weakness, error, scandal, and division. These, and all other difficulties, are fully known to Christ. And it is not the child, but the father, that must know what food and clothing he should have, and the physician that must know what are the ingredients of his medicines, and why.

Lord, open my eyes, then, to see what thou hast revealed; and help me willingly to shut them to the rest; and to believe and trust in thee for both: not to stagger at thy sealed promises, nor selfishly to desire particular knowledge, which belongs not to me, as if I could trust myself, and my own knowledge, and not thine. Lord teach me to follow thee, even in the dark, as quietly and confidently as in the light (having the general light of thy promise of felicity). I knew not the mystery of thy conception, incarnation, or the way of the workings of thy Spirit on souls. No wonder if much of the resurrection and unseen world be above my reach; much more that thy infinite majesty is incomprehensible to me: how little do the brutes that see me

know of my thoughts or me ! I have no adequate knowledge of any one thing in the world, but somewhat of it is unknown. O blessed be that love and grace that has given me a glorified Head in heaven, to know all for me which I know not : hear and trust him, living and departing, O my soul ! who hath told thee that we shall be with him where he is, and shall behold his glory ; and that a crown of salvation is laid up for us, and we shall reign with him, when we have conquered and suffered with him, and hath bid us live in joyful hope of our exceeding, eternal, heavenly reward, and at our death to commend our spirits into his hand : receive us, Lord, according to thy promises. Amen.

SHORT MEDITATIONS

ON

ROMANS v. 1—5.

OF THE

SHEDDING ABROAD GOD'S LOVE ON THE HEART
BY THE HOLY GHOST.

EXPERIENCE of the want of this effusion of God's love, and some small taste of its sweetness, make me think the thoughts of this very suitable to one expecting death.

The words contain a golden chain of highest blessings on all true Christians.

I. They are supposed to have faith, that is, both a general trust in God's revelations and grace, and a special trust in Jesus Christ, as given by the Father's love to be the Redeemer, to justify, sanctify, and glorify his people. I have oft proved this justifying faith to be no less than our unfeigned taking Christ for our Saviour, and becoming true Christians, according to the tenour of the baptismal covenant. As to the acts, it is formally trust—one in three; the understanding's assenting trust, the will's consenting trust, and the executive power's practical, venturing, obeying trust.

II. All true believers are justified; even all that consent to the baptismal covenant, and choose God to be their God, and Christ to be their Saviour, and the Holy Ghost to be their Sanctifier, and give up themselves to him by true resolution, as their only ruler, hope, and happiness; though this be done with so great weakness, as endeth not all doubts, nor quieteth the mind.

To be justified is not to be accounted such as have no sin, but, 1. To be made such by pardon through Christ's merits, and by true faith, as God will take by special love and favour unto life. 2. To be accounted such by God. 3. To be virtually

sentenced such by the law of grace and faith, and to be just in law sense. 4. At last to be judged such by public sentence. 5. And to be used as such.

Not justified by the law of innocency, or of Moses, but by Christ's law of grace.

Not justified perfectly till the time of perfection. Much punishment on soul and body is yet to be taken off, and more sins daily to be pardoned, and we, before the world, to be sentenced as just to life everlasting.

III. The justified have peace with God. They are reconciled, and in a state of love and friendship. It signifieth mutual peace, but with great inequality. God's love and favour to us is the stable, constant part. Our consent also, and acceptance of his terms of peace, is constant in its truth: but our sense of God's love, which is the peace possessed by the soul, is weak and inconstant, and too oft quite lost or obscured by ignorance, mistake, and fear. But it must be known that this is a diseased state, unnatural to the believer as such; as it is unnatural for a woman married to a faithful husband, to lie in terror, thinking that he will kill her, or doth not love her; or for a child to think the same of a loving father. Faith, of its own nature, tendeth to the soul's peace and joy, in the sense of God's love. And how is Christ offered to us, but as a Saviour, to bring us by grace to glory? And he that accepteth him as such, whereby he is justified, doth sure believe that he is offered as such; for none can accept what he thinks not to be offered. And this implieth some hope, at least, that Christ will be such to us; and did faith work strongly and kindly, its effect would be a constant, joyful state of soul, as pleasant health and mirth is to our natures. All our distrustful fears and griefs, and disquietness of soul, are for want of more faith, as sickness and pain is for the want of vital causes of health.

IV. This peace with God is only "through our Lord Jesus Christ." Though it be a vain dream to think, by justifying faith is meant Christ only, and not faith: yet it is no other faith but the foresaid believing trust on Christ. Therefore, as faith is our part, so it supposeth Christ, and all the works of his office, and righteousness, on his part, as its object. Christ is the purchasing cause; but our trust and acceptance is that which is pleasing to God, and chosen by him to be our part, without innocency, or keeping the Jewish law.

Since man once sinned, God's justice, and man's conscience,

tell us, that we are unfit for God's acceptance or communion immediately, but must have a suitable Mediator. Oh! blessed be God for this suitable Mediator. Without him I dare not pray, I cannot hope, I dare not die; God would else frown me away to misery. All the hope of pardon and salvation that I have; all the access to God, and the mercies and deliverances that I have received, have been by this Author and Finisher of our faith. Into his conducting hands I give my soul; and into his preserving hands both soul and body; and into his receiving hands I commend my departing soul.

V. Ver. 2. "By whom we have access by faith unto this grace wherein we stand;" that is, into this state of blessed Christianity, peace with God, and the following blessings. As it is by marriage that a woman hath right to her husband's estate and honours, and by inheritance that a child comes to his father's maintenance and land. This is no diminution to God's love. To say it is all by Christ, is not to take it as ever the less from God the Father. It is more to give us Christ, and life in him, than to have given us life without a Christ. (John iii. 16; 1 John v. 10—12.) As God is, nevertheless, the giver of light to the earth, for giving it them by the sun. Second causes diminish not the honour of the first.

VI. "And rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Here is, 1. The beatifical object—"the glory of God." 2. The beatifical act—"rejoice." 3. The mediate, causing act—"hope." All presupposing faith and justification.

2. The "glory of God" is that glorious appearance of God to man and angels, which maketh happy, 1. The mind by beholding it. 2. The will by loving it, and receiving the communications of love. 3. The executive powers by joyful praise, &c.

2. Though some foretastes are here, it is yet said to be hoped for; and we hope for that which is not seen. When faith is said to be that which we are justified or saved by, it includeth hope, though, more precisely taken, they are distinct. "We are saved by hope." The same word is oft translated 'trust' and 'hope;' and faith is trust. To trust Christ for salvation, includeth hoping that he will save us. But hope is denominated from the good hoped for, and faith from the cause by which we hope to obtain it.

Hope doth not necessarily imply either certainty or uncertainty. It may stand with both in various degrees.

3. Rejoicing is made by God the very naturally desired state of the soul. It is, when natural, the pleasant efflorescence of the spirits, or their state of health.

It is pleasure that is the spring or poise of all motion sensitive in the world. *Trahit sua quemque, voluptas.* Appetite, or will, is the active principle; and congruous, good, or delectable, is the object. The world is undone by the seduction of false, deceitful pleasure; and though we that made not ourselves are not so made for ourselves as that our pleasure or felicity in God should be so high in our desire as God himself, who is the ultimate object of our love: yet, seeing such an object he is, and the love of him (and received from him) is our felicity, these are never to be separated.

What have I to rejoice in, if this hoped-for glory be not my joy? All things else are dying to me: and God himself is not my felicity, as he afflicts me, nor as he giveth me the transitory gifts of nature, but as he is to be seen in glory. If this be not my joy, it is all but vanity. What, then, should all my thoughts and labour aim at more, as to myself, than to hope for and foretaste this glory. No sin lieth heavier on me than my hopes of glory raise me to no higher joy; and that the great weakness of my faith appeareth by such dull thoughts of glory, or by withdrawing fears. Sure there is enough in the glory of God, soundly believed and hoped for, to make a man rejoice in pain and weakness, and to make him long to be with Christ. I live not according to the nature of Christianity, if I live not as in peace with God, and in the joyful hopes of promised glory.

VII. "Not only so, but we glory in tribulation." Glory is so transcendent, and tribulation so small and short, that an expectant of glory may well rejoice in bodily sufferings. It is tribulation for Christ and righteousness' sake that we are said to glory in: the rest, for our sins, it is well if we can improve and patiently bear. Yet in them we may rejoice, in hope of glory, though we glory not of them. Oh! if all the painful, languid days, and nights, and years that I have had, as the fruit of my sin, had been sufferings for that which I am now hated and hunted for, even for preaching Christ when men forbid me, how joyfully might I undergo it: but yet, even here, approaching glory should be my joy. Alas! my groans and moans are too great, and my joy too little.

VIII. "Knowing that tribulation worketh patience." That

which worketh patience is matter of joy: for patience doth us more good than tribulation can do hurt; why, then, do I groan so much under suffering, and so little study and exercise patience and no more rejoice in the exercise thereof?

IX. "And patience, experience." It is manifold and profitable experience, which patient suffering brings. It giveth us experience, as of nature's weakness, and the great need of faith; so of the truth of God's promises, the love and tenderness of Christ, the acceptance of our prayers; and the power of the Spirit's aid and grace. O what abundance of experiences of God and ourselves, and the vanity of creatures, had we wanted, if we had not waited in a suffering state: alas! how many experiences have I forgotten.

X. "And experience, hope." A bare promise should give us hope: but we are still distrustful of ourselves, and of all the clearest evidences, till experience help us, and set all home. Oh, what an advantage hath a Christian of great and long experience for his hope and joy! And yet when notable experiences of God's providence are past and gone, an unbelieving heart is ready to question, whether the things came not by mere natural course; and, like the Israelites in the wilderness, dangers and fears bear down even long and great experiences. This is my sin.

XI. "And hope maketh not ashamed." That is, true hope of what God hath promised, shall never be disappointed. They that trust on deceitful creatures are deceived, and ashamed of their hope: for all men are liars, that is, untrusty; but God is true, and ever faithful: O what a comfort is it that God commandeth me to trust him! Sure such a command is a virtual promise, from him that cannot fail that trust which he commandeth. Lord, help me to trust thee in greatest dangers, and there to rest.

XII. "Because the love of God is shed abroad upon our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given to us." It is the love of God shed abroad on our hearts by the Holy Ghost which must make us rejoice in hope of the glory of God, even in tribulation.

Here I must consider, I. What is meant by the love of God. II. Why, and how, it is shed abroad on the heart by the Holy Ghost.

I. By the love of God is meant the effects of his love. 1. His special grace. 2. The pleasant gust or sense of it.

II. God's love thus shed on the heart, presupposeth it expressed in the gospel and providence, and contains all these particulars.

1. The sanctifying of the soul by renewing grace. This is the giving of the Spirit, as he is given all true Christians.

2. Herein the Holy Ghost makes us perceive the exceeding desirableness of the love of God, and maketh us most desire it.

3. He giveth the soul some easing hope of the love of God.

4. He quieteth the doubts, and fears, and trouble of the soul.

5. He raiseth our hopes, by degrees, to confident assurance.

6. Then the thoughts of God's love are pleasant to the soul, and give it such delight as we feel in the love and fruition of our most valued and beloved friends.

7. The soul in this state is as unapt to be jealous of God, or to question his love, as a good child or wife to question the love of a parent or husband, or to hear any that speak evil of them.

8. This, then, becomes the habitual state of the soul, in all changes, to live in the delightful sense of the love of God, as we do live in pleasure with our dearest friends.

O blessed state, and first fruits of heaven! and happy are they that do attain it. And though lower degrees have their degree of happiness, yet how far short are such, in goodness, amiableness, and comfort, of those that are thus rich in grace.

This presupposeth, 1. Knowledge of God and the gospel. 2. True belief, and hope. 3. A sincere and fruitful life. 4. Mortification as to idol worldly vanities. 5. A conviction of our sincerity in all this. 6. A conclusion that God doth love.

But yet it is somewhat above all this. A man may have all this in his mind and mouth, and yet want this gust of effused love upon his heart. These are the way to it, but not itself.

This is the greatest good on this side heaven; to which all wealth and honour, all fleshly pleasure and long life, all learning and knowledge, are unworthy to be once compared: briefly,

1. It is the flower and highest part of God's image on man.

2. It is the soul's true communion with God, and fruition of him, which carnal men deride: even as our eye hath communion with the sun, and the flourishing earth enjoys its reviving heats.

3. It is that which all lower grace doth tend to, as childhood doth to manhood: and what is a world of infants, comparatively, good for?

4. It is that which most properly answereth the design of

redemption, and the wonders of God's love therein ; and all the tenour of the gospel.

It is that which is most fully called the Spirit of God, or Christ in us : he hath lower works, but this is his great work, by which he possesseth us, as God's most pleasant habitation : "For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of power and love, and a sound mind." (2 Tim. i. 7.)

6. It is only that which all men, in general, desire, I mean, the only satisfying content and pleasure that man is capable of on earth. All men would have quieting and constant pleasure ; and it is to be found in nothing else but the effused love of God.

7. It is that which will make every burden light, and all affliction easy : when the sense of God's love is still upon the soul, all pain and crosses will be but as blood-letting by the kindest physician, to save the patient's life. God will not be suspected, or grudged at, in suffering ; his love will sweeten all.

8. It will overcome abundance of temptations, which no men's wit, or learning, or knowledge of the words of Scripture, will overcome. No arguments will draw a loving child, or wife, from the parents, or husband, that they know doth love them. Love is the the most powerful disputant.

9. It puts a mellow, pleasant sweetness into all our duties. When we hear the word, or receive the sacrament, it is to such a soul as pleasant food to the most healthful man ; when we pray, or praise God, it comes from a comforted heart, and excites and increaseth the comfort it comes from. Oh, who can be backward to draw near to God in prayer or meditation, who tasteth the sweetness of his love ! This is religion indeed, and tells us what its life, and use, and glory is. This is true walking with God in the best degree. When the soul liveth in the taste of his love, the heart will be still with him, and that will be its pleasure. And God most delights in such a soul.

10. This is it that putteth the sweetest relish on all our mercies. Deny God's love, and you deny them all. If you taste not his love in them, you taste little more than a beast may taste ; poor food and raiment is sweet, with the sense of the love of God. Had I more of this, I should lie down, and rise, and walk in pleasure and content. I could bear the loss of other things ; and though nature will feel pains, I should have pleasure and peace in the midst of all my pains and groans. This is the white stone, the new name ; no man well knoweth it who never felt it in himself.

1. There is no dying comfortably without this experienced taste of the love of God. This will draw up the desires of the soul; love tasted, casteth out fear: though God be holy and just, and judgment terrible, and hell intolerable, and the soul hath no distinct idea of its future state out of the body, and though we see not whither it is that we must go, the taste of God's love will make it go joyfully, as trusting him; as a child will go any whither in his father's power and hand.

But all the knowledge in the world without this quiets not a departing soul. A man may write as many books, and preach as many sermons of heaven, as I have done, and speak of it, and think of almost nothing else, and yet till the soul be sweetened and comforted with the love of God shed abroad on it by the Holy Ghost, death and the next life will be rather a man's fear than his desire. And the common fear of death which we see in the far greater part even of godly persons doth tell us, that though they may have saving desires and hopes, yet this sense of God's love on the heart is rare.

What wonder, then, if our language, our converse, our prayers, have too little savour of it, and in comparison of joyful believers' duties, be but like green apples to the mellow ones.

My God, I feel what it is that I want, and I perceive what it is that is most desirable: Oh, let not guilt be so far unpardoned as to deprive my soul of this greatest good, which thou hast commended to me, and commanded, and which in my languishing and pains I so much need! Did I beg for wealth or honour, I might have it to the loss of others. But thy love will make me more useful to all, and none will have the less for my enjoyment; for thou, Lord, art enough for all; even as none hath the less of the sunlight for my enjoying it. The least well-grounded hope of thy love is better than all the pleasures of the flesh; but without some pleasant sense of it, alas! what a withered, languishing thing is a soul! Thy loving-kindness is better than life; but if I taste it not, how shall I here rejoice in God, or bear my heavy burdens?

O, let me not be a dishonour to thy family, where all have so great cause to honour thy bounty by their joy and hopes; nor, by a sad and fearful heart, tempt men to think that thy love is not real and satisfactory. I can easily believe and admire thy greatness, and thy knowledge. Let it not be so hard to me to believe and taste thy goodness and thy love, which is as necessary to me.

If there be any thing (as surely there is) in which the divine nature and spirit of adoption consisteth, as above all the art and notions of religion, which are but like to other acquired knowledge, sure it must be this holy appetite and habitual inclination of the soul to God, by way of love, which is bred by an internal sense of his loveliness, and loving inclination to man; which differenceth a Christian from other men, as a child differs towards his father, from strangers, or from common neighbours. Till the love of God be the very state and nature of the soul, (working here towards his honour, interests, word, and servants,) no man can say that he is God's habitation by the Spirit; and how the heart will ever be thus habited, without believing God's love to us, it is hard to conceive.

Experience tells the world how strongly it constraineth persons to love one another, if they do but think that they are strongly beloved by one another. In the love that tends to marriage, if one that is inferior do but know that a person of far greater worth doth fervently love them, it almost puts a necessity and constraint on them for returns of love: nature can scarce choose but love in such a case. Love is the loadstone of love. A real taste of the love of God in saving souls by Christ and grace, is it that constraineth them to be holy; that is, to be devoted to that God in love.

III. But this must as necessarily be the work of the Holy Ghost, and can be no more done without him than the earth can be illuminated, and the vegetables live, without the sun. But all the approaches of the Holy Spirit suffice not to produce this great effect, and give us the divine, holy nature.

The same sunshine hath three different effects on its objects.

1. On most things, as houses, stones, earth, it causeth nothing but accidents of heat, colour, and motion.

2. On some things it causeth a seminal disposition to vegetable life, but not life itself.

3. In this disposed matter it causeth vegetable life itself.

So doth the Spirit of God, 1. operate on millions but lifeless accidents, as the sun on a stone wall. 2. On others dispose and prepare them to divine life. 3. On others so disposed it effecteth the divine life itself, when holy love is turned into a habit like to nature.

That none but the Holy Ghost doth make this holy change is evident; for the effect cannot transcend the causes. 1. Nature alone is dark, and knoweth not the attractive amiableness

of God, till illuminated; nor can give us a satisfactory notice of God's special love to us.

2. Nature is guilty, and guilt breedeth fears of justice, and fear makes us become wild, and fly from God, lest he should hurt us.

3. Nature is under penal sufferings already; and feeleth pain, fear, and many hurts, and foreseeth death; and under this is undisposed of itself, to feel the pleasure of God's love.

4. Nature is corrupted and diverted to creature vanity, and its appetite goeth another way, and cannot cure itself, and make itself suitable to the amiableness of God.

5. God hateth wickedness, and wicked men; and mere nature cannot secure us that we are saved from that enmity.

Diligence may do much to get religious knowledge, and words, and all that which I call the art of religion; and God may bless this as a preparation to holy life and love. But till the soul's appetite incline, with desire, to God and holiness, divine things will not sweetly relish.

And this is a great comfort to the thoughts of the sanctified, that certainly their holy appetite, desire, and complacency, is the work of the Holy Ghost. For, 1. this secureth them of the love of God, of which it is the proper token. 2. And it assureth them of their union with Christ, when they live because he liveth, even by the Spirit, which is his seal and pledge. 3. And it proveth both a future life and their title to it: for God maketh not all this preparation for it by his Spirit in vain.

But, alas! if it were not a work that hath great impediment, it would not be so rare in the world. What is it in us that keepeth the sun of love from so shining on us as to revive our souls into holy contentments and delight?

It must be supposed, 1. that all God's gifts are free, and that he giveth not to all alike; the wonderful variety of creatures proveth this. 2. The reasons of his differencing works are his own will, and inferior reasons are mostly unknown to us, of which he is not bound to give us an account.

3. But yet we see that God doth his works in a casual order, and one work prepareth for another; and he maketh variety of capacities, which occasion variety of receptions and of gifts; and he useth to give every thing that to which he hath brought it into the next capacity and disposition.

And therefore, in general, we may conclude that we feel not

God's love shed abroad upon the heart, because the heart is undisposed, and is not in the next disposition thereto: and abused free-will hath been the cause of that. That we have grace, is to be ascribed to God: that we are without it, is to be ascribed to ourselves.

1. Heinous guilt of former sin may keep a soul much without the delights of divine love; and the heinousness is not only in the greatness of the evil done materially, but oft in our long and wilful committing of smaller sins, against knowledge, and conscience, and consideration. The Spirit thus grieved by hardened hearts, and wilful repulses, is not quickly and easily a Comforter to such a soul; and when the sinner doth repent, it leaveth him more in uncertainty of his sincerity when he thinks, 'I do but repent, purpose, and promise now; and so I oft did, and yet returned the next temptation to my sin: and how can I tell that my heart is not the same, and I should sin again if I had the same temptations.' O what doubts and perplexities doth oft wilful sinning prepare for!

2. And sins of omission have here a great part. The sweetness of God's love is a reward which slothful servants are unmeet for. It follows a "Well done, good and faithful servant." There is needful a close attendance upon God, and devotedness to him, and improvement of gospel grace, and revelation, to make a soul fit for amicable, sweet communion with God; all that will save a soul from hell will not do this.

He that will taste these divine love tokens must, 1. Be no stranger to holy meditation and prayer, nor unconstant, cold, and cursory in them: but must dwell and walk above with God. 2. And he must be wholly addicted to improve his Master's talents in the world, and make it his design and trade on earth to do all the good in the world he can; and to keep his soul clean from the flesh, and worldly vanity. And to such a soul God will make known his love.

3. And alas! how ordinarily doth some carnal affection corrupt the appetite of the soul; when we grow too much in love with men's esteem, or with earthly riches, or when our throats or fancies can master us into obedience, or vain desires of meat, drink, recreation, dwelling, &c., the soul loseth its appetite to things divine; and nothing relisheth where appetite is gone or sick. We cannot serve God and Mammon, and we cannot at once taste much pleasure both in God and Mammon. The old,

austere Christians found the mortification of the fleshly lusts a great advantage to the soul's delight in God.

4. And many errors about God's nature and works much hinder us from feasting on his love.

5. And especially the slight and ignorant thoughts of Christ, and the wondrous workings of God's love in him.

6. And especially if our belief itself once shake, or be not well and firmly founded.

7. And our slight thoughts of the office and work of the Holy Ghost on souls, and our necessity of it, and our not begging and waiting for the Spirit's special help.

8. And lastly, our unfaithful forgetfulness of manifold experiences and testimonies of his love, which should still be as fresh before us.

Alas! my soul, thou feelest thy defect, and knowest the hinderance, but what hope is there of remedy? Will God ever raise so low, so dull, so guilty a heart, to such a foretaste of glory, as is this effusion of his love by the Holy Ghost? The lightsome days in spring and summer, when the sun reviveth the late naked earth, and clothes it with delectable beauties, differs not more from night and winter, than a soul thus revived with the love of God doth differ from an unbelieving, formal soul.

Though this great change be above my power, the Spirit of God is not impotent, backward, barren, or inexorable. He hath appointed us means for so high a state; and he appointeth no means in vain. Were my own heart obedient to my commands, all these following I would lay upon it; yea, I will do it, and beg the help of God.

I. I charge thee, think not of God's goodness and love, as unproportionable to his greatness and his knowledge; nor overlook, in the whole frame of heaven and earth, the manifestation of one any more than of the other.

II. Therefore let not the wickedness and misery of the world tempt thee to think basely of all God's mercies to the world; nor the peculiar privileges of the churches draw thee to deny or contemn God's common mercies unto all.

III. I charge thee to make the study of Christ, and the great work of man's redemption by him, thy chiefest learning, and most serious and constant work; and in that wonderful glass to see the face of divine love, and to hear what is said of it by the Son from heaven; and to come boldly, as reconciled to God by him.

IV. O see that thy repentance for former sins against knowledge, and conscience, and the motions of God's Spirit, be sound, and thoroughly lamented and abhorred, how small soever the matter was in itself; that so the doubt of thy sincerity keep not up doubts of God's acceptance.

V. Let thy dependence on the Holy Ghost, as given from Christ, be henceforth as serious and constant to thee as is the dependence of the eye on the light of the sun, and of natural life upon its heat and motion. Beg hard for the Holy Spirit, and gladly entertain it.

VI. Oh, never forget the many and great experiences thou hast had, these almost sixty years observed, of marvellous favour and providence of God, for soul and body, in every time, place, condition, relation, company, or change, thou hast been in! Lose not all these love tokens of thy Father, while thou art begging more.

VII. Hearken not too much to pained flesh, and look not too much into the grave; but look out at thy prison windows to the Jerusalem above, and the heavenly society that triumph in glory.

VIII. Let all thy sure notices of a future life, and of the communion we have here with those above, draw thee to think that the great number of holy souls that are gone before thee, must needs be better than they were here; and that they had the same mind, and heart, and way; the same Saviour, Sanctifier, and promise, that thou hast; and therefore they are as pledges of felicity to thee. Thou hast joyfully lived with many of them here; and is it not better to be with them there? It is only the state of glory foreseen by faith, which most fully showeth us the greatness of God's love.

IX. Exercise thyself in psalms of praise, and daily magnify the love of God, that the due mention of it may warm and raise thy love to him.

X. Receive all temptations against divine love with hatred and repulse; especially temptations to unbelief: and as thou wouldest abhor a temptation to murder, or perjury, or any other heinous sin, as much abhor all temptations which would hide God's goodness, or represent him to thee as an enemy, or unlovely.

Thus God hath set the glass before us, in which we may see his amiable face. But alas! souls in flesh are in great obscurity, and, conscious of their own weakness, are still distrustful of

themselves, and doubt of all their apprehensions, till overpowering objects and influences satisfy and fix them. For this my soul with daily longings doth seek to thee, my God and Father: O pardon the sin that forfeits grace: I am ready to say, 'Draw nearer to me;' but it is meet to say, 'Open thou my eyes and heart, and remove all impediments, and undisposedness, that I may believe, and feel how near thou art, and hast been to me, while I perceived it not.'

XIII. It is God's love shed abroad on the heart by the Holy Ghost, which must make us "rejoice in hope of the glory of God:" this will do it, and without this it will not be done.

This would turn the fears of death into joyful hopes of future life. If my God will thus warm my heart with his love, it will have these following effects in this matter.

I. Love longeth for union, or nearness, and fruition; and it would make my soul long after God in glorious presence.

II. This would make it much easier to me to believe that there is certainly a future blessed life for souls; while I even tasted how God loveth them. It is no hard thing to believe that the sun will give light and heat, and revive the frozen earth: nor that a father will show kindness to his son, or give him an inheritance. Why should it be hard to believe that God will glorify the souls whom he loveth, and that he will take them near himself; and that thus it shall be done to those whom he delights to honour?

III. This effusion of divine love would answer my doubts of the pardon of sin: I should not find it hard to believe that love itself, which hath given us a Saviour, will forgive a soul that truly repenteth, and hates his sin, and giveth up himself to Christ for justification. It is hard to believe that a tyrant will forgive, but not that a father will pardon a returning prodigal son.

IV. This effusion of divine love will answer my fears, which arise from mere weakness of grace and duty: indeed, it will give no other comfort to an unconverted soul, but that he may be accepted if he come to God by Christ, with true faith and repentance; and that this is possible. But it should be easy to believe, that a tender father will not kill or cast out a child for weakness, crying, or uncleanness: divine love will accept and cherish even weak faith, weak prayer, and weak obedience and patience, which are sincere.

V. This effused love would confute temptations that are

drawn from thy afflictions ; and make thee believe that they are not so bad as flesh representeth them : it would understand that every son that God loveth he chasteneth, that he may not be condemned with the world, and that he may be partaker of his holiness, and the end may be the quiet fruit of righteousness ; it would teach us to believe that God in very faithfulness doth afflict us ; and that it is a good sign that the God of Love intendeth a better life for his beloved, when he trieth them with so many tribulations here : and though Lazarus be not saved for his suffering, it signified that God, who loved him, had a life of comfort for him, when he had his evil things on earth. When pangs are greatest, the birth is nearest.

VI. Were love thus shed on the heart by the Holy Ghost, it would give me a livelier apprehension of the state of blessedness which all the faithful now enjoy : I should delightfully think of them as living in the joyful love of God, and ever fully replenished therewith. It pleaseth us to see the earth flourish in the spring ; and to see how pleasantly the lambs, and other young things, will skip and play : much more to see societies of holy Christians loving each other, and provoking one another to delight in God. O then what a pleasant thought should it be, to think how all our deceased, godly friends, and all that have so died since the creation, are now together in a world of divine, perfect love ! How they are all continually wrapped up in the love of God, and live in the delight of perfect love to one another !

O my soul, when thou art with them, thou wilt dwell in love, and feast on love, and rest in love ; for thou wilt more fully dwell in God, and God in thee : and thou wilt dwell with none but perfect lovers : they would not silence thee from praising God in their assembly : tyrants, malignants, and persecutors, are more strange there (or far from thence) than toads, and snakes, and crocodiles, are from the bed or bedchamber of the king. Love is the air, the region, the world, they live in : love is their nature, their pulse, their breath, their constitution, their complexion, and their work : it is their life, and even themselves and all. Full loth would one of those spirits be to dwell again among blind Sodomites, and mad, self-damning malignants upon earth.

VII. Yea, this effused love will teach us to gather the glory of the blessed from the common mercies of this life : doth God give his distracted, malignant enemies, health, wealth, plenty

pleasure, yea, lordships, dominions, crowns, and kingdoms ; and hath he not much better for beloved holy souls ?

Yea, doth he give the brutes life, sense, delight, and beauty ; and hath he not better things for men ; for saints ?

There are some so blind as to think that man shall have no better hereafter, because brutes have not, but perish. But they know not how erroneously they think. The sensible souls of brutes are substance, and therefore are not annihilated at death : but God put them under us, and made them for us, and us more nearly for himself. Brutes have not faculties to know and love God, to meditate on him, or praise him, or, by moral agency, to obey his precepts : they desire not any higher felicity than they have : God will have us use their service, yea, their lives and flesh, to tell us they were made for us. He tells us not what he doth with them after death : but whatever it is, it is not annihilation, and it is like they are in a state still of service unto man : whether united, or how individuate, we know not : nor yet whether those philosophers are in the right, that think that this earth is but a small image of the vast superior regions, where there are kingdoms answerable to these here, where the spirits of brutes are in the like subjection in aërial bodies, to those low, rational spirits that inhabit the aërial regions, as in flesh they were to man in flesh. But it is enough for us that God hath given us faculties to know, love, praise, and obey him, and trust him for glory, which he never gave to them, because they were not made for things so high. Every creature's faculties are suited to their use and ends.

And love tells me, that the blessed God, who giveth to brutes that life, health, and pleasure, which they are made and fitted for, will give his servants that heavenly delight in the fulness of his love and praise, and mutual, joyful love to one another, which nature fundamentally, and grace more immediately, hath made them fit for.

Blessed Jehovah ! for what tastes of this effused love thou hast given me, my soul doth bless thee, with some degree of gratitude and joy : and for those further measures which I want, and long for, and which my pained, languid state much needs, and would raise my joyful hopes of glory, I wait, I beg, from day to day. O give me now, at the door of heaven, some fuller tastè of the heavenly felicity : shed more abroad upon my heart, by the Holy Ghost, that love of thine, which will draw up my longing soul to thee, rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God.

THE
MOTHER'S CATECHISM;
OR,
A FAMILIAR WAY OF
CATECHISING OF CHILDREN,
IN THE
KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, THEMSELVES, AND THE
HOLY SCRIPTURES.



THE
PREFACE TO THE READER.

CANDID READER,

THIS is the errand of this preface, to assure thee that this treatise was left under Mr. Baxter's own hand, which now is exposed to thy view from the press. It was Timothy's great commendation and advantage, "That from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wise to salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. iii. 15.) Early draughts from this spring will give us such a relish of the waters issuing from thence as will render our most diligent reading of them both profitable and delightful to us. This book at once may profit both the mother and the child: and the contents thereof may, with greater ease and pleasure, impress themselves upon their minds and memories, by frequent reading of them, and discourse about them, than if children were confined to get large portions of catechisms without book. At least the former would greatly prepare them for the latter. Had Mr. Baxter completed what he did design herein, the reader might have been more advantaged thereby.

All that the author left thou hast. And, if it be desired, the continuation may possibly be exposed to view hereafter, by another hand. Pray heartily for the publisher; for none more need and crave it, than

Thine, in the best of bonds and services,

MATTHEW SYLVESTER.

THE
FAMILIAR WAY
OF
CATECHISING CHILDREN.

MOTHER. Come, child, are you willing to be taught your catechism?

Child. What is the Catechism, mother?

M. It is those things which you must know above all other.

C. Why must I needs know them?

M. Because God made you to know them, and without such knowledge you cannot be good, nor blessed of God.

C. Cannot I do as well without learning as other children do?

M. Those that do not learn that which God would have them learn, are all naught, and miserable, worse than beasts.

C. But I find that I had rather play, and talk of somewhat else than learn my catechism: I do not love it.

M. That is because you are foolish and naught; and it is by learning that you must become wise and better, or else you will become undone for ever, and wish that you had never been born.

C. What is it that I must learn?

M. You must learn to be wise, and good, and happy for ever, and to escape hell, misery, and sin.

C. I would fain be wise, and good, and happy: how shall I learn that?

M. Not by knowing how to eat and drink, laugh and play; and those little common things which beasts and fools know: but it must be by knowing great, and excellent, and needful things.

C. What are those things?

M. The first thing that you must know is, what you are yourself, and what you are made for: do you know how man doth differ from all sorts of beasts and birds?

C. Yes, I know a man from a beast as soon as I see them.

M. You see how the shape of their bodies differ: but that is a small difference. It is their souls that differ, which you cannot see; their flesh and ours little differ, but in shape: the soul is the man, or his chiefest part, the body is but like clothing to the soul.

C. What is a soul, mother?

M. The soul is a spirit, and cannot be seen; but it is that which hath all the power: the body is but earth, and water, and air, and when the soul is gone, it rots and turns to earth.

C. How do you know that we have souls?

M. We know it by that which the soul doth in us: do not you know that you are alive, and that you hear me now, and that you feel when you are hot or cold, well or ill, hungry or thirsty? It is the soul by which you live, and see, and feel.

C. Dogs and beasts do see and feel, have they souls?

M. Yes; they have souls, or else they would be but dead carcasses: but their souls and ours greatly differ. And this is the difference which you must know.

C. What is the difference between our souls and theirs?

M. You may see some of the difference outwardly between our works and theirs. Beasts do not talk as we do, nor write books, nor study laws, and other learning, nor make ships, nor build cities, nor govern kingdoms as men do. But yet because they do somewhat like these, it is a greater difference than all these that you must know.

C. What is that greater difference?

M. Beasts, and birds, and fishes, are all made but for the use of man, and therefore their souls can do nothing but feed and preserve their bodies, and serve us: they never think of God or another world; they live not by a law, but by the inclination of their nature: they have no hopes of heaven, or fear of hell, nor any conscience within to tell them of duty to God or sin against him: nor do they knowingly worship, serve, and seek him. But the soul of man is made for all this; even to know God and his law, and our duty, and to think of and prepare for another life after death, and to fear punishment then, and hope and prepare for everlasting happiness, and to serve and obey God that we may obtain it. This is the difference.

C. Are you sure that a man is made for all this?

M. Yes: do you not see that good men do all this? Do they not teach and learn God's law, and obey him, and worship

him, and hope for heaven hereafter? Good men could not do this if God had not made them fit to do it.

But I must teach you how to know all this better hereafter, when I come to tell you what God saith of it in his word: I cannot teach you all at once.

The Second Part of the Catechism.—To know God.

M. I have told you first what you must know of yourself, and what a man is: I must next tell you what God is: for if you know not God, it were as good you knew nothing at all.

C. What is God?

M. God is not a body, nor like any thing that we can see: you must have no such thought of him.

C. How then shall I know what he is?

M. You must know him by his works, and especially by knowing yourself, and the soul of man, which is called God's image.

C. How can I know him when I do not see him?

M. Nothing but the lowest or basest things are seen besides the light. You never saw the wind: and yet you see and feel what it doth; how it can overthrow trees and houses: and by that you know that it is strong. You see roses, and other flowers, and apple trees, and pear trees; and you see and taste how one differs from another in flower and fruit; but you do not see that within them which causeth all the beauty, and sweetness, and difference, that appeareth without. You do not see that inward soul of birds and beasts, by which they live and move: nor (as I told you) you do not see my soul, nor your own. But you may know much of things unseen by what they do.

C. What be the works of God, by which I may know him?

M. All that you see in the world: God made them all, and God doth preserve them all. Do you not see all the country about you? This earth is many thousand and thousand times bigger than you see; and it stands upon nothing, but it is round like a ball, and hangs in the air, and the heavens are round about it, as far as you see them over it. All England is as much less than the whole earth, as a pin is less than all this house: and you see how the ground doth bring forth all sorts of trees, and herbs, and corn, and flowers: how many thousand thousands of birds, beasts, sheep, and other living things, do live in all countries, and how many thousand thousand men. All these God made, and feeds and keeps them: and yet all this earth is next to nothing, in comparison of the heavens, and the rest of

the world. Yonder sun that you see doth give light and heat to all this earth, and yet it is many thousand miles from hence: it goeth round about the earth every day and night, and goeth many thousand miles every hour; and yet it is many thousand times bigger than all the earth: many of the stars seem little to you, because they are many thousand miles from us, and yet are many hundred times bigger than all this earth: and no man can tell how many thousand thousand miles there may be beyond all the stars which we can see. Do you not look up and wonder at all this?

C. O yes, I wonder at it: but how shall I know God by all this?

M. Are you not sure that he that doth all this must needs be great and almighty, and have more power than all the world? How could he make such a world, and give all this power to sun, and moon, and stars, and sea, and land, if he had not more than they all himself? No one can give more than he hath to give.

C. I know God must needs be great and powerful.

M. And do you not perceive that God is most wise, and knoweth more than all the world? How else could he make heaven and earth in such admirable order, and keep them in the same course through all generations? How could he make nights and days, winter and summer? Yea, the very body of every man and beast is so wonderfully ordered, that the wisest men in the world are posed in searching into the work of God therein. We know not how a man is made, nor how he digesteth his meat into blood and flesh, nor any such like. All the men in the world cannot make one flower, or grass, nor one bird or fly: and it is God that giveth all men and angels all the knowledge and wisdom which they have: and therefore he must needs have more himself: he must needs know all the secret thoughts of all men in the world, because they cannot think a thought without him. Do you not perceive, then, that God is infinitely wise and knoweth all things?

C. Yes; he that made all, must needs know all.

M. And you must know by his works that God is as good as he is great and wise, and that he is better than all the world besides, both heaven and earth. For all things are good that he hath made: the sun is good; without its light, and heat, and motion, what were the earth but a dungeon and a grave? The moon and stars are good, heaven and earth are good, sea

and land are good, all the fruits of the earth, and all living things are good, save that man's sin hath brought a curse on them for his punishment: and among men, learning and virtue are good; our food and clothing, our parents and friends, and all good people are good. And could God make the world good, if he were not good?

C. I know God must needs be powerful, and wise, and good, above all; but yet I do not know him.

M. I told you that God is not of a bodily substance and shape, like things seen. He is a Spirit, and the Maker of all bodies and spirits. And therefore I next told you, that you must know him partly by knowing yourself, that is, your soul.

C. Is God like me, or like a man?

M. God hath made the soul of man in his own image, in some little likeness to himself: and so you may know somewhat of God by yourself, as you may see one's face in a glass.

C. Wherein is man's soul like God?

M. In many things: 1. Our souls are spirits, and cannot be seen, and so is God. 2. Yet it is by the soul that the body liveth, and moveth, and feeleth. It can do nothing without the soul; nor can anything in the world without God: it is God that doth all that sun and moon, sea and land, wind and rain, men and beasts, and all things do. 3. Our souls have life to move us, and understandings to know good and evil, and wills to love the good and hate the evil: and in this they are God's image; for God is life itself, and knoweth all things, and loveth good, and hateth evil more than we. So that as our souls are unseen spirits, of life, and understanding, and will, in our bodies, so God is more than a soul to the whole world, to heaven, and earth, and sun, and moon, and stars, and to every soul and body that is.

C. I understand you that God is a Spirit, that hath more power, and knowledge, and goodness, than all the world besides, but yet methinks I do not know him.

M. No one in the world knoweth God perfectly, but we may know so much of him as may make us wise, and good, and happy: and you must increase in knowing God more and more as long as you live. If you are willing to learn, God will help you to know him a great deal better hereafter than you can do now while you are but a child. You do not know how to build houses, nor write books, nor do any other thing which you see men do, and how then should a child know as much of God as a man

may know? When you come to understand the Bible, which is God's word, you will know God better. Therefore I must next teach you to know what God's word is, that it may teach you more.

The Third Lesson.—To know God's Word.

C. What is it that you call the word of God?

M. Because we are dull, and cannot sufficiently know God and his will by his works alone; therefore God hath more fully and plainly told it us from heaven.

C. Did God speak it himself?

M. God is not like a man, nor doth he talk as men do: but God can many ways make known his mind to us. As your soul doth talk by your tongue, and not of itself without it, so God hath sometimes spoken by angels, and sometimes by prophets, to whom he inwardly maketh known his will, as you inwardly know now what you think or see. And some part of God's word he did write himself; that is, the ten commandments: and all this is written for us in the Bible, which is God's Book.

C. Who did God speak this to, and when was it?

M. Not all at once, nor all to one man; but by degrees, as I teach you some one day, and some another. He first spake to Adam and Eve, and after to others, especially to Noah, and after that to Moses, and he taught Moses to write down all that God had said to him, and all that he said from the beginning of the world, which was meet for us to know: and he wrote the ten commandments in two tables of stone, and gave them to Moses to keep, and many other laws he spake to him by angels: and after that in many ages, when he had any new thing to make known, or sinful people to reprove, he often sent some prophet to them: and, last of all, he sent his Son from heaven, to tell us more than all before had told us.

C. What is a prophet?

M. One that God tells his mind to, either inwardly himself, or outwardly by an angel, and then sendeth him to tell others as from God.

C. How were men sure that God sent these prophets?

M. God did bring to pass all that he sent them to foretell, and the laws which he commanded by Moses, and by Jesus Christ, he owned by many great miracles before all the people, such as none can do but by the power of God, which I shall tell you more fully when I tell you the history of the Bible. Besides

that, the Bible is such a book for matter and manner, as none could write, if God had not taught it them.

C. How come we to have this book ?

M. Those that God gave it to did give it to their children ; and so it hath been delivered from one generation to another, as the laws of this land are, by which men hold their estates ; and God made it the office of ministers to keep and preach his word.

C. Are no other books God's word but the Bible ?

M. That which our teachers do take out of the Bible and teach the meaning of it, is so far God's word as it is in the Bible whence they take it : and good books to expound this word of God to us, and help us to practise it.

C. Is all true that is written in the Bible ?

M. Some part of the Bible tells us what lies the devil and wicked men have used to deceive men with : it is true that such lies were told. And all that God saith must needs be true, for it is impossible for God to lie.

C. Why is it impossible ?

M. Because God is perfect ; all lying is either for want of knowledge of the truth, or because men are naught, and love not the truth : or for want of power to attain their wills without a lie. But God wanteth neither knowledge, nor goodness, nor power, and he hateth liars, and condemneth them, and therefore cannot lie himself.

The Fourth Lesson.—Of the Creation.

C. What is it that the Bible tells us ?

M. The first thing is, how God made the world.

C. I would fain know that. How was it ?

M. In the beginning, God made the heaven and the earth. And the earth was first like a great puddle of dirty water, without light or shape ; and God did take six days' time to shape it out of this confused heap, and to adorn it with all the creatures which it possesseth.

C. Why did God take just six days to do it ?

M. We must not ask why God doth it : his will must satisfy us : but this helpeth us the more distinctly to take notice of God's work.

C. What did God make the first day ?

M. The light.

C. How did God make it ?

M. As he did all the rest ; by the power of his bare will and word. He said, ' Let there be light,' and there was light.

C. What did God make the second day ?

M. He made the firmament, which is called heaven.

C. What did he make the third day ?

M. He gathered the waters by themselves, which is the sea, and made the land dry, which is the earth. And he made the earth to bear grass, herbs, and trees, with seed.

C. What did God make the fourth day ?

M. He made the sun, and moon, and stars, to be lights, and otherwise useful to the earth.

C. Had he not made light before ?

M. As he made earth, in one mass, before he shaped it : but now he formed it into all these parts which we call sun, moon, and stars.

C. What did he make the fifth day ?

M. Fishes and fowls, with power to beget more and multiply.

C. What did he make the sixth day ?

M. All sorts of beasts on the earth ; and, lastly, man.

C. How did God make man ?

M. He made his body of the earth, and then breathed his soul into it.

C. Did not God make woman ?

M. When he made the man, he took a rib out of his side, and made it a woman, to be his wife, to show that a man and his wife should be, as it were, one.

C. Who were the first man and woman ?

M. Adam and Eve.

C. Did God make them good or bad ?

M. He made all things good, and he made man in his own image, with life for action, understanding for knowledge, and free-will to choose good and refuse evil ; and he put them in a most pleasant garden, called Paradise.

C. What did he bid them do there ?

M. God being man's Governor, gave him, in nature, a law to keep : and also commanded him to dress and keep the garden, and gave him all lower creatures for his use ; only, to try his obedience, he charged him not to eat the fruit of one tree, which was called the tree of knowledge, on pain of death.

C. And what did Adam and Eve do then ?

M. God suffered the devil to tempt Eve in the shape of a serpent, to eat of that one forbidden fruit, and she did eat, and persuaded Adam to eat also, and so they broke the law of God.

C. How did the devil tempt her to it ?

M. He told her that eating of the tree of knowledge would make her wise, and to be like God himself in knowledge; and that God forbade it them because he would not have them know so much; and that God would not put them to death as he had threatened, but they might safely eat it. And so because the fruit was pleasant, and she thought it would increase her knowledge, she did eat, and gave it Adam to eat.

C. What did God do with them then?

M. God reprov'd and judg'd them, and cast them out of Paradise, and curs'd the earth to them, and judg'd them to labour and sorrow, pain and death. But yet, in mercy, so far forgave them as that he promised them a Saviour to deliver them from hell and everlasting misery, if they would believe him and repent, and sincerely obey him for time to come.

C. Did eating of one tree deserve so great a punishment?

M. Yes: for it was Almighty God that they sinned against. And they believed the devil before God, and took God to be a liar, and to be their envious enemy, and the devil to be more their friend: and this they did when they were new made good, and able to do better, and had all things given them by God to serve them.

C. But why did God curse the earth?

M. For a punishment to man; that it should bear briars, and be barren without his toil, and be a place of sorrow to him.

C. But must all men suffer and die because Adam sinned?

M. All that were since born came out of Adam and Eve: and when they were guilty, and naught, we must needs be born so to, for they could beget no better than they were themselves: and hence it is that the nature of all mankind is become naught, and turned from God; and this is called our original sin.

C. But what did God do to the devil for deceiving them?

M. The devils were once angels, and fell by sin themselves, and therefore did bear malice both to God and man; and he would make all others as bad and miserable as himself: and ever since then he hath sought man's destruction; but God promised a Saviour that should overcome him, and deliver us.

C. What did God do on the seventh day?

M. Having made the world in six days, God appointed the seventh to be the Sabbath day, in which man should rest from his labours, and worship God in remembrance of the creation.

C. And what doth God ever since?

M. He preserveth and governeth the world which he made,

both heaven and earth. And he enjoyeth himself, and needeth nothing ; but all need him.

The Fifth Lesson.—More of the Scripture History.

M. Do you remember what I taught you last ?

C. You told me how God made the world, and how Adam and Eve sinned by the devil's temptation, and how we are all born in sin, and how God judged man to suffering and death, but pronounced a Saviour to deliver believers. But what did men do after Adam's fall ?

M. Adam had two sons, Cain, the elder, and Abel, the younger. Adam had taught them both to worship God ; but Cain was a bad man, and did not serve God with all his heart, but as bad men do now ; but Abel was a good man, and served God heartily with the best he had. And God accepted Abel's service, and refused Cain's ; and therefore, Cain envied and hated Abel, and killed him : and God forsook Cain, and punished his posterity.

C. Did the first man that was born kill his own brother ? What made him kill him ?

M. God suffered this to tell us all ever after, that the world will still have two sorts of men ; bad men, that are the servants of the devil, and good men, that serve God ; and that the bad will hate and persecute the good, because they are like the devil, and the good are the children of God ; and their hearts and lives are contrary to one another.

C. But if God loved Abel better, why would he not save him from being killed ?

M. It was no loss to him to be killed, for God took his soul to heaven : he was the first man that went to heaven, and the first martyr : and God giveth the best place in heaven to the martyrs, that suffer and die by wicked men for serving God. God loveth all good men, and yet he will not keep them all from being hated, and persecuted, and killed by the wicked. This doth but try them, as gold is tried in the fire, and prepare them for greater glory in heaven than other good men have.

C. What did the rest of the world do after ?

M. God gave Adam another good son in Abel's stead, called Seth ; and many of his posterity served God ; and especially Enoch was so holy a man, that God took him up to heaven without dying ; but Cain's posterity, and most others, proved so

bad, that at last all the good men were worn out, saving one called Noah and his household : and then God would bear with them no longer, but drowned them all with a flood of rain from heaven.

C. I pray tell me how they were drowned, and how Noah escaped?

M. God told Noah beforehand what he would do, and bid him prepare an ark, and taught him how to make it, like a ship with many rooms, and covered, and bid him take into that ark two of all sorts of beasts and birds, and meat for them, and for himself, and his wife, and his three sons, and their three wives. And Noah believed God, and made the ark as God bade him; and he preached to those about him, to persuade them to believe and repent a long time while he was making the ark; but they would not believe him, till the flood came and drowned all, both man and beast; but Noah, and his household in the ark, were carried about, as in a ship on the water, till all the rest were drowned, and the waters dried up, and then he came out.

C. And what came of him after?

M. He was an husbandman, and planted a vineyard, and made wine; and once, by temptation, he was drunk with the wine, and laid himself naked in his drink; and one of his sons, called Ham, in mockage, told the other two, called Shem and Japhet; and they, in reverence to their father, would not see his nakedness, but covered him with their faces backward; wherefore Noah blessed Shem and Japhet, and their posterity, and cursed Ham and his posterity, and they proved wicked men.

C. It is strange that so good a man would be drunk?

M. It was but once, and thereby we are warned to take heed of fleshly temptations, and to beg God's grace to keep us, and not to trust ourselves.

C. Did all the world come from Noah?

M. Yes; and when they increased to great numbers, one great man, called Nimrod, would needs build a tower so high, that if another flood came, it should not reach the top of it to drown them. And when abundance of men had worked at it long, God derided them, and stopped them.

C. How did he stop them?

M. He made them forget the language which they all spake before, and made them speak every man a language of his own,

so that they understood not one another : and hence came many languages into the world.

C. And what did they next ?

M. Most men grew worse and worse, and forsook God, and worshipped creatures and devils ; but some of Shem's and Japhet's posterity served God ; but especially one called Abraham ; but I must tell you his story the next time.

The Sixth Lesson.—The History of Abraham and his seed.

C. You told me, that you would next tell me the history of Abraham. I pray you, how was that ?

M. When the world grew worse and worse, Abraham being one of the posterity of Shem, was so good a man, that God singled him out for a special blessing.

C. Why, what did Abraham do ?

M. He forsook idols, and served and obeyed God : and yet he lived till he was an hundred years old, and his wife Sarah fourscore and ten, before he had any child by her. And then God told him that he would give him a son, from whom should spring a great nation, which should be God's special people, chosen before all the world ; and that Christ the Saviour should be of his seed, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Abraham and Sarah thought this strange at first, that a man of an hundred years old, and a woman of fourscore and ten, should have a son, and a nation spring from him ; but seeing God said it, he believed God, knowing that nothing is impossible to him : and God took this so well, that Abraham did so fully trust him, that he imputed it to him for righteousness, and renewed his promise to him, and gave him a son called Isaac : and Abraham having an elder son called Ishmael, by another woman, that son abused Isaac, and God bid Abraham cast him out of his house ; but yet a great nation sprung from Ishmael. When Isaac grew up, he had two sons by his wife Rebecca at a birth, Esau and Jacob ; and God chose Jacob, and not Esau, to be the heir of those great blessings which he had promised Abraham : and Esau hated and persecuted Jacob, because God preferred him. And when Jacob grew up, he had twelve sons, and a daughter ; and ten of these sons fed sheep and cattle in the commons far off, and the two youngest, Joseph and Benjamin, being loved best by their father, stayed at home. And God revealed things to come to Joseph in his dreams ; and when Jacob sent Joseph to see how his brethren did, he

told them his dreams. One dream was, that they were binding sheaves in the field, and Joseph's sheaf stood upright, and all their sheaves bowed to it; signifying that all they should bow to him. Another dream was, that the sun, and moon, and seven stars, (signifying his father, and mother, and brethren,) did bow to him: and his brethren hated him because of his dreams, and because his father loved him more than them. And once when his father sent him to see how they did, when they saw him, they plotted how to kill him; and Reuben, the eldest, desiring to save him, got them to cast him into a dry pit: and presently some merchant carriers passed by that way, who carried spices into Egypt to sell: and Judah, the fourth brother, got the rest to sell him to these carriers; and so they took his coat, and dipped it in blood, and sent it to his father, making him believe that some wild beast had torn and devoured Joseph; but while Jacob mourned, Joseph was carried into Egypt, and sold there to Potiphar, who was chief marshal to Pharaoh. And Joseph being Potiphar's servant, God blessed all that he was trusted with; so that his master prospered extraordinarily in house and field, so that he made Joseph his steward, and trusted him with all that he had. Now Joseph was a very comely, well-favoured man, and his mistress fell in love with him, and tempted him to lie with her; but he feared God, and still denied her. At last, when he was alone, she took hold of his coat, and said lie with me; but he ran away, and left his coat with her. When she saw this, to hide her own lust and sin, she called out to the servants, and told them that Joseph would have forced her to lie with him: and making Potiphar, her husband, believe it, he was angry, and put Joseph in a prison. When Joseph was in prison, God made the gaoler kind to him, so that he trusted him to keep all the rest of the prisoners, and he had the rule of all, and God prospered all that he did. At that time the king was displeased with his chief butler, and chief baker, and put them into the same prison where Joseph was: and at last both of them had a special dream, but they could not tell the meaning of them; and God gave Joseph the gift to expound dreams. And Joseph expounded their dreams to them, and told them that the baker's dream signified that he should be hanged; but the butler's dream signified that he should be restored to his place; and he prayed him then to remember him; and so it came to pass; but the butler did not remember Joseph. After this, king Pharaoh himself had a great dream, which troubled

him, and none could expound it. He dreamed that he saw in a meadow seven fat kine, and there came seven lean kine, and did eat them up: then he saw seven full ears of corn, and seven thin, blasted ears came and eat them up. Then his butler remembered Joseph, and told the king how he had expounded their dreams in prison. And the king sent for him, and brought him out of the dungeon, and told him his dreams. And Joseph answered him, that God had made known to him what he would do; that there should be seven years of great plenty; and next seven years of great famine in many countries; and therefore he advised the king to choose a wise man, to set officers over all the land of Egypt, to take up the fifth part of all the food of the land, the first seven years, that there might be food enough for the seven years of famine. And the king believed him, and liked the motion, and thought no man so fit as Joseph, that had the Spirit of God. So he made Joseph ruler over all his house, and the next person to himself, and put his ring on his hand, and a gold chain about his neck, and made all men bow to him, and obey him, and made him ruler over all the land, and appointed him to gather up the fruit and corn into storehouses all over the land, till the famine should come, that they might not perish: and thus God began to fulfil Joseph's dream; but his father and brethren dwelt in Canaan, another land, and knew none of all this; but I must tell you the rest the next time, and not too much at once.

The Seventh Lesson.—The Rest of the History of Joseph and Jacob.

C. I long to hear the rest of the history of Joseph.

M. When Joseph had been seven years ruler, next the king, over all the land of Egypt, his old father, Jacob, thinking all the time he had been dead, the seven years' famine came next, as Joseph had foretold; and when all the corn was eaten up, the people all lived on the stores that Joseph had laid up; and they were fain to sell their cattle and lands to the king to buy them bread, that they might not famish, and after that to sell themselves to be the king's servants; and so Joseph gave them corn to sow the ground: and ever after it became a law that the fifth part of all the fruit of the land should be the king's, except the priests' lands.

C. Were not they, and their cattle and land, the king's before?

M. No; not till they sold it him, with themselves. The king was their ruler; but they, and their lands, and goods, and cattle were their own, and not his.

C. And what became of Joseph's father and brethren?

M. The famine was also in their land; and when it was so great that they were ready to famish, and they heard that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob sent his ten sons to buy corn there, keeping the youngest, Benjamin, whom he best loved, at home with him; and when they came into Egypt they were brought to Joseph to buy corn. Now Joseph was grown up, and the king had changed his name, and they knew him not, nor what was become of him; but Joseph knew all them when he saw them. And Joseph carried it sourly to them, and took on him that he did not know them, and asked them whence they came; and they bowed to him, and told him they came from the land of Canaan to buy corn; and he took on him to take them for enemies and spies; and they told him they were twelve brethren, the sons of one man, and one was dead, and the youngest was at home with his father. And he bid them send one and fetch their young brother, and then he would believe them. And he put them three days in prison: and at the end of three days he granted that they should all go home, and bring corn to their father, save one that he would keep in prison, as a pledge, till they returned; for he remembered how cruelly they had thought to murder him, and had sold him, and what his dream was, that they should bow to him. And when they were all in prison, and thus in danger, they remembered their sin against Joseph and repented, and said one to another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he entreated us and we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben said, Did not I speak to you, and say, Do not sin against the child, and you would not hear: therefore his blood is now required." Thus God makes men's consciences condemn them for their sin, when punishment comes, that before would take no warning. All this while Joseph heard them, and they thought that he understood not what they said, because he spake in the language of Egypt: and he turned away from them, and wept to hear them bewail their sin, and then came to them again.

C. And what did those that he sent home?

M. He kept Simeon prisoner; and when the other nine were to go, he made his servants fill their bags with corn, and give

them provision for the way, but secretly to put every man's money into his bag, to the corn. And when they came to their inn, and opened their bags for provender for their asses, they found their money, and then their hearts sunk yet more, for they feared God did it to punish them; but they went home to their father Jacob, and told them all that had befallen them, and how the ruler of the land took them for spies, and spake roughly to them, and kept Simeon prisoner till they should bring Benjamin to him. And Jacob lamented, and asked them why they would tell him that they had another brother. And they said, Could we know that he would say, Bring your brother?

C. And did they bring him?

M. Jacob resolved that he should not go, till the famine was so great that they must send to Egypt for more corn, or die, and there was no remedy; and they durst not go without their brother, for Joseph said, "Ye shall not see my face, unless you bring your brother with you." And when there was no remedy, Jacob let him go, and sent them for more corn, with double money, to restore that which was put into their bags again.

C. And how did Joseph receive them next?

M. They took a present of balsam and spices with them, beside their money. And when they came to him, Joseph told his steward that those men should dine with him, and bid him make full provision for them. And when he came home at noon they gave him their present, and bowed to the ground. He asked them how their father did. And when they saw they must dine with him, they were afraid lest he would charge the money on them that they had, and keep them prisoners; and they told the steward what had befallen them, and how they had found their money in their bags; but the steward bid them fear not, for he had their money. And when Joseph saw his young brother Benjamin, he spake kindly to him, but was fain to get away into his chamber to weep; and when he had wept awhile he washed his face, and came out to them again. And at dinner he set them by themselves, every one according to his age, and they marvelled at it; and he sent every one of them of the best from his own table, but twice as much to Benjamin as to the rest: and because he would keep them longer, and affect them more, he made his steward fill all their sacks with corn, and again put their money into their sacks; and into Benjamin's sack he put his own silver drinking cup. And when they were

gone out of town, in the morning, he sent his servant after them, to charge them with stealing his cup, and to bring them back. At this they were sore amazed, and said, "God forbid that we should do so: let him die that hath the cup, and let us be my lord's servant's:" but when they were searched, the cup was found in Benjamin's bag. Then they were all confounded, and came back to Joseph; and when he accused them for stealing his cup, they fell to the ground and said, "God hath found out our iniquity; we are all thy servants." But he said, No; none shall be my servant but he with whom the cup was found: but Judah told him how hardly he had got his father to consent that Benjamin should go with them, and that he was fain to undertake to bring him back, and that his father would die with grief if he returned not; and therefore besought him that the lad might go home, and that he might be a bond servant in his stead. Then Joseph could no longer refrain, but made all his servants go forth, and he wept so loud that the king's house heard him: and he opened himself to his brethren, and said, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? But they could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence, remembering their sin against him. But he comforted them, and said, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt; but be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, for God hath sent me hither before you to preserve life:" and he told them all that God had done for him, and that there were two years of famine yet to come; so he wept over them, and kissed them, and bid them make haste home, and tell his father all this; and bid him come away with all his children's children, and his flocks, and he would give them the best place in Egypt, because of the famine that was yet to come. And when the king heard that Joseph and his brethren were there, he commanded also that their father and they should come and dwell in Egypt, in the best place that Joseph would choose for them. So Joseph gave them wagons and provision, and a present to his father, and sent them all away.

C. Sure Jacob would be very glad of this.

M. You may easily think how it would transport him with joy; but at first he could not believe it, that Joseph was Lord of Egypt, who, he thought, had been many years dead; but when he saw the wagons, and that all was true, the old man's heart revived in him with joy and thankfulness to God; and so

he and all his children's children went into Egypt, and there Pharaoh welcomed them; and Joseph placed them in Goshen, the best part of the land.

The Eighth Lesson.—The History of Sodom and Lot.

C. I would fain know what God did with all the other countries all this while?

M. We can know no more of that than God hath told us in his word. But this we know, that God had every where some righteous men whom he loved; and in every nation, they that feared God, and did righteously, were accepted of him. But the most proved wicked men, and idolaters, and hated them that were good. And to show this, I will next tell you the history of Sodom and of Lot, which should have gone before, but that I would put Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's history together.

C. What was the case of Sodom?

M. In Abraham's days there were four kings joined together, and made war on many countries, and destroyed many people near the place where Abraham dwelt: and there were five kings went out to fight against them, the king of Sodom, and of Gomorrah, and of Admah, and of Zeboim, and of Zoar: and the four kings conquered these five, and carried away the people and their goods. In Sodom, Abraham had a brother's son dwelt, called Lot, and he was carried away prisoner with the rest. When Abraham heard of it, he armed all his servants, (who were three hundred and eighteen,) and got some neighbours to join with him, and by night followed the four conquering kings, and overtook them, and fought with them, and destroyed them, and rescued Lot, and all the persons and goods that they had taken; and when he had done, he gave them all back to the kings that had lost them, and would keep nothing of it to himself. Then there was one Melchizedek, that was king of Salem, and priest of the most High God, that came out and blessed Abraham, and Abraham gave him tithes of all; yet after this great deliverance, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other cities and kings that were delivered, continued very wicked men, till God destroyed them.

C. How did God destroy them?

M. As Abraham was sitting in his tent door, three angels, in likeness of travellers, passed by; and Abraham being used to entertain strangers, bowed to them, and entreated them to stay and eat with him. They consented; and he killed a calf, and made

them a feast: upon this the Lord renewed his promise to him, to give all that country to his seed; and told him what he would do to Sodom, and said he would not hide it from Abraham, because he would command his children, and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord: so he told him that in Sodom and Gomorrah were so very wicked men, that he would destroy them all. Abraham remembered his cousin Lot in Sodom, and he humbly made his prayer to the Lord, that he would not destroy the righteous with the wicked, but would spare the city for the righteous' sake, if there were but fifty righteous in it: and the Lord promised to spare it, if there were but fifty. Then Abraham prayed that he would spare the city, if there were but forty-five; and the Lord granted it. Then Abraham prayed that he would spare it, if there were but forty; and again, if there were but thirty; and again, if there were but twenty; and the Lord still granted it. Then Abraham begged of God not to be offended, if he once more asked, that he would spare it, if there were but ten righteous; and the Lord promised that also. Then Abraham knew that there was no remedy.

C. And what became of Lot in Sodom?

M. Two angels, like men, came to Sodom, to Lot's house; and the men of Sodom were so unnaturally wicked, that they commanded Lot to bring out the two strange men, that they might abuse them like women; but Lot humbly entreated them not to do so wickedly with strangers; but they reviled Lot, (just as the wicked do godly men now,) and said, "This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them." And as they crowded towards the door to break in, the angels pulled in Lot, and struck them all with blindness; and yet this miracle did not stop them, but they groped to find the door. Then the angels told Lot who they were, and that they came to destroy the city; but God had mercy on him; and therefore bid him take his wife, and his children, and his two sons-in-law, and presently fly out of the city for his life; but his sons-in-law would not believe the danger, but took it for a fanatic mockage. And while Lot lingered, the angels took hold of him, and his wife, and two daughters, and brought them out of the city, and bid them fly for their lives to the mountains, and look not back behind them; but Lot prayed the Lord to let him escape to Zoar, the least of the five cities; and God heard him, and saved that city for his sake. But God rained fire and brim-

stone upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and consumed all the cities and the people there, and round about; but Lot's wife that was forbidden did look behind her, and God turned her into a pillar of salt, to warn us not to disobey God. But Abraham stood afar off, to see what would become of Sodom and Gomorrah, and saw the smoke of it like a great furnace, rise up toward heaven. And the place where these cities stood, and all the plain about them, remaineth ever since to this day, a dead sea, or stinking, pitchy lake, which nothing can live in; and travellers familiarly see it that go that way.

Thus you see, by the example of Sodom, how God hateth sin, and how he will use the wicked at the last; and yet that in this very wicked city of Sodom, Abraham thought there might have been fifty righteous persons; and that one man's family that was righteous, and mourned for their wickedness, God would not forget, but saved him.

The Ninth Lesson.—The Israelites' Deliverance out of Egypt.

C. Will you tell me what became of the children of Jacob and Joseph in Egypt?

M. When they were planted in Goshen, God did so greatly prosper them, that they increased more than the Egyptians, and were so many, that after some ages, when the old ones were all dead, another king arose, that knew not Joseph: and he was afraid lest in time they should grow too strong for him, and he endeavoured to destroy them.

C. What did he do to them?

M. First he gave the midwives command to kill all the sons that were born to them at their birth; but God put his fear in the midwives, and they made excuses, and said that the women (then called Hebrews and Israelites) were delivered before they came, and so did not obey the bloody king. Then the king made them to be his slaves and drudges, and he made them daily labour in making brick, with which he built great, stately monuments; and he set taskmasters over them, that should beat them, if they made not as many bricks as he required of them; and thus they were used cruelly, like beasts, and cried, in their bondage, to God for deliverance; and God did hear, and did deliver them.

C. How did he do it?

M. One of the Hebrew women to keep her new-born son from being murdered, made a basket of bulrushes, and daubed

it with slime and pitch, and put the child into it, and put it into the flags by the river's brink ; (when she had hid it three months, and could hide it no longer ;) and his sister stood afar off to see what would become of him. And God so ordered it that the king's daughter came that way with her maids to wash herself in the river, and they saw the basket, and opened it, and found a comely child, and he wept. The king's daughter said, " This is one of the Hebrews' children : " the child's sister said, " Shall I go and call a nurse of the Hebrew women to nurse it for thee ? And she said, Go." So his sister ran and called his own mother ; and so she nursed her own child for king Pharaoh's daughter, and she called his name Moses, and he was bred up as her son : and when he was a man, God made him the captain and deliverer of the Hebrews called Israelites.

C. How did he deliver them ?

M. God stirred him up ; and one day, when he saw an Egyptian abuse an Israelite, he killed the Egyptian, and saved the Israelite. The next day two of the Israelites were striving, and Moses said to him that did the wrong, " Why strikest thou thy fellow ? " And it being a bad man, he said to Moses, " Who made thee a prince and a judge over us ? Wilt thou kill me as thou didst the Egyptian ? " Thus bad men cannot endure to be reproved. And when Moses heard that it was known, he was fain to fly out of the land, for fear of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, till that king died. And Moses married a daughter of Jethro, priest of Midian. And when he kept his father-in-law's flock in the wilderness, an angel of God appeared to him in a flame of fire, in a bush, which burned and was not consumed ; and God by the angel spake to him out of the fire, and said, " I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters, and am come to deliver them, and to bring them out of Egypt into a good land which I promised Abraham. And I will send thee to Pharaoh that thou mayest bring them out." And Moses said, " Who am I, that I should go to king Pharaoh, and bring them out ? " But God charged him to go and tell the Hebrews, and tell the king, that the Lord God had sent him to bid them come and sacrifice to him in that wilderness. And God told him, " I am sure that Pharaoh will not let them go ; but I will smite Egypt with all my wonders, and then he will let them go." And Moses said, " They

will not believe me, that God appeared to me." And God said, "Cast down the rod that is in thy hand;" and he did, and it became a serpent; and Moses was afraid of it. And God said, "Take it by the tail;" and he did, and it became a rod again. And God said, "Put thy hand in thy bosom," and he did; and when he took it out it was all leprous. And God said, "Put thy hand in thy bosom again;" and he did, and it was whole as before. This was to encourage Moses to trust God's power and word, and that he might do the same, and other miracles, before the people, to make them believe. But Moses made excuses, and said he was slow of speech, and prayed God to send some one else. And God reprov'd him, and said, "Aaron thy brother can speak well, and he shall be thy mouth, and thou shalt speak from God to him, and take this rod in thy hand, and with it thou shalt do signs (or wonders)." So Moses took his wife and children, and the rod of God, and went back into Egypt; for they were all dead that sought his life. And Moses told his brother Aaron all that God had said; and Moses and Aaron called all the elders of Israel together, and told them; and they believed, and were glad that God would deliver them.

C. But what said the king to them?

M. Moses and Aaron went to king Pharaoh, and said, "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness." And the king said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let them go."

C. Why would he not let them go?

M. Because they were his servants, and did his work, as our horses and oxen do for us. And the king reviled Moses and Aaron for hindering the people from their work, and bid the taskmasters lay more burdens and work upon them; and whereas before they had straw given them to burn their brick with; he bid them gather stubble themselves, and they should make all their task of brick, and have no straw; for they talked of going into the wilderness to serve God, because they were idle. And now their case was far worse than before; for they were beaten when they could not make as much brick as they did before. And when the people complained to the king that they were beaten for not making brick without straw, the king said, "Ye are idle, ye are idle, and therefore talk of going to serve God; you shall have no straw, and yet have none of your task abated." And when the people found themselves in so bad

a case, they were impatient with Moses and Aaron, and laid the fault on them, as making the king abhor them. And Moses complained to God for sending him to make the people more miserable than before. But thus doth God often use to make his servants' sufferings greater, when he is about to deliver them.

C. Why doth he so?

M. To humble them, and try their faith and patience, and to try their enemies; and to show his power the more in their deliverance.

C. And what did they do next?

M. Then God said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do;" and bid him go tell the Israelites, that the Lord doth promise to deliver them. But the anguish of their hearts was so great, that they would not hear Moses and Aaron.

C. What did they then?

M. Then God bid Moses go again to Pharaoh the king, and say, "Let my people go;" and if he ask for a sign, cast down thy rod, and it shall become a serpent. And they did so; and the king had some enchanters, or witches, about him, and they did so too, and their rods turned into serpents; and therefore the king refused to obey God and let the people go.

C. By what power did the witches do this?

M. By the devil's power, which God suffered, to show his own the more; for when they were all turned to serpents, Moses and Aaron's rod devoured all theirs.

C. And what did they after this?

M. The first plague was this: God bid Moses put forth his rod, that was turned to a serpent, over the river, in the sight of the king; and the waters were turned to blood, and the fish died and stunk; and their ponds were turned to blood, and the people had no water. Yet the king's heart was hardened, because his conjurers did the same; God suffering it to make his power yet more known.

The second plague was this: God bid Moses stretch forth his rod over the waters, and it should fill the land with frogs; and he did so, and the frogs swarmed over the land, and in the king's house and bed-chamber; and the conjurers did the like. Then the king called Moses and Aaron, and said, "Entreat the Lord to take away the frogs, and I will let the people go." So Moses prayed, and God heard them, and the frogs died; but the dead heaps made the land to stink. And when the king

saw that he was delivered of them, his heart was hardened again.

Then God sent the third plague: Aaron stretched forth his rod in the dust of the land, and the dust turned all to lice, which swarmed over all the land: and the conjurers tried to do the same, but could not; and therefore told the king, "This is the finger of God." And yet his heart was hardened, and he would not let them go.

Then God sent a fourth plague, even such swarms of flies as destroyed all the fruit of the land. But in Goshen, where the Hebrews dwelt, there were none. Then the king called Moses, and bid them go and sacrifice to God in Egypt. But Moses said, "Nay; but they would go out three days' journey." The king bid them go, so they would not go far off. So they prayed to God, and God took away all the flies. But the king's heart was hardened still; and God sent the fifth plague, which was a great murrain upon the cattle, that all the horses, oxen, and sheep, &c., of the Egyptians died; but not one of the Israelites' cattle died. And yet the king would not let them go.

Then God sent the sixth plague: Moses and Aaron took a handful of ashes before the king, and sprinkled it in the air, and it turned to boils upon men and beasts, even on the conjurers themselves. And yet the king would not let them go.

Then God sent the seventh plague: Moses told the king, "To-morrow I will send hail that will kill all the cattle that are not fetched home out of the field." And those Egyptians that believed God fetched home their cattle; and the rest were killed with hail, fire, lightning, and thunder. But there was none in Goshen, among the Israelites. Then the king repented, and said, "I and my people have sinned, and the Lord is righteous, I will let you go: pray God to cease the hail and thunder." But when the thunder ceased, his heart was hardened again, and he would not let them go.

Then God sent the eighth plague: they told Pharaoh, that locusts, or caterpillars, should so swarm as to darken the land, and eat up every green thing that was left. Then the Egyptians petitioned the king to let the Hebrews go, before all the land was destroyed. And the king consented that the men should go, but not their wives and children; but they would go all or none. And then he reviled them, as if they made religion a cloak for rebellion to be gone. But God sent the locusts, and

they eat up all that was green in the land. Then the king called Moses and Aaron, and said, "I have sinned; pray God to deliver me this once;" and they did; and God sent a wind that carried away all the locusts. Yet the king's heart was hardened, and God sent the ninth plague, and darkness came upon all the land, that for three days they could not see or stir. Then the king bid them go, with children and all, so they would leave their cattle behind (for death or darkness was not in Goshen); but they would not leave a hoof behind. Then Pharaoh bid Moses come near him no more, for if he came again he should die. And Moses said, "Content, I will see thy face no more." Then God said to Moses, "I will send but one plague more, and then they will thrust you out. Therefore let all the people borrow silver, and gold, and jewels, of their neighbours, and take them with them."

C. But was not that stealing?

M. Yes, if God had not bid them; but all things are God's, and he may give them to whom he will.

C. And what was this last plague?

M. About midnight, God killed the eldest sons in all the houses of Egypt, even the king's and all. And there was a great cry all over the land, and they came and entreated the Israelites to be gone. And this was the night of their deliverance, which God commanded them to keep in remembrance to all generations.

C. How were they to keep it in remembrance?

M. By a feast and sacrament, which God appointed. For God, by Moses, bid all the Israelites make ready that night, and every house was to kill a lamb, and with hyssop strike the blood on the door posts without, and to eat the flesh roasted with unleavened bread and bitter herbs; they must eat it girded and shod, with their staves in their hands, in haste, as ready to be gone. And every door that had this blood on, God's angel passed by, that night, when he killed all the first-born of Egypt. And that all generations should keep this great deliverance in remembrance, God commanded them to do this again in the same manner once a year on that same day, for ever.

C. And how and whither did they go?

M. When every house had one dead, the king and people thrust them out, and they lent them their jewels. And they

carried dough unleavened, and all their cattle: six hundred thousand men went, besides children, and a mixed multitude. God had before told Abraham that his seed should sojourn four hundred and thirty years, and then he would give them deliverance, and the land of Canaan; and the very day when the four hundred and thirty years were accomplished, God brought them out. And they had a great wilderness to go through, and the Red Sea between them and it, before they could come to the promised land.

C. How, then, did they get over?

M. God was resolved to make this deliverance so great, that they and their children should never forget it: and though there was a nearer way than over the sea, God would not let them go that way. But his angel caused a pillar of fire by night, and of cloud by day, to go before them all the way, to show them which way they should go. And when they were gone, Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he repented that he let them go from serving him: and he made ready his chariots and armies, and followed after them, and came near them; so that the sea was before them, and the king and his army at their backs, to kill them.

C. What did they do then?

M. This new danger made the Israelites again, in fear and unbelief, to cry out against Moses and Aaron for bringing them out to die in the wilderness, but God did it to show his power. For Moses cried to the Lord, and the angel of God that went before Israel, removed, and went behind them, and was a dark cloud between them and Pharaoh, so that he could not see them. And God bid Moses hold his rod over the sea, and the sea divided to the right hand and to the left, and was as a wall of water on either side, and dry ground between; and God made the Israelites go through it on foot: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he followed them into the sea; and the angel took off their chariot wheels and stopped them, and then they would have fled back, but could not: for as soon as the Israelites were over, Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and it came to its place, and drowned the king and all his army, so that one man of them did not escape.

C. Sure the people would never forget this, nor displease or distrust such a God any more.

M. They presently made a psalm of praise to God; but how they behaved themselves in the wilderness I shall tell you next.

The Tenth Lesson.—Israel's Travels in the Wilderness.

C. What did Moses with them when they were got through the sea?

M. For all the power of God that they had seen, Moses could not quiet the people, nor get them to trust God in any danger, want, or difficulty. And God purposely tried them whether they could trust him.

C. How did he try them?

M. First when they came into the wilderness, they went three days and found no water; and when they found water at Marah, it was bitter, and then they murmured again against Moses, and God showed him a tree, which he cast into the water, and it made the water sweet to drink.

C. How were they next tried?

M. When they had no meat in the wilderness, and they murmured again against Moses, and wished they had died in Egypt, where they had meat enough. And God said to Moses, I will rain bread from heaven for them, and they shall go out and gather it every day; but on the sixth day they shall gather for two days, and none shall go out to gather on the Sabbath-day. And God's glory appeared to reprove them for their murmuring; and God said at evening, you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread, that you may know that I am the Lord. So at evening abundance of quails fell among them, and they had flesh enough: and in the morning a dew fell and left a little round thing behind it like coriander seed, called manna. And this God gave them for bread: but he forbade them to keep it till morning, that they might receive it every day from God. But some would needs try, and that which they kept till morning had worms, and stunk. And when God bid them gather enough for two days before the Sabbath, it did not stink on the Sabbath-day. And some of them did not obey God, but went out to gather manna on the Sabbath-day, but they found none, and God reproved them. This bread God fed them with in the wilderness forty years: the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

C. What was their next trial?

M. They came to another place where was no water, and they murmured against Moses for bringing them thither to kill them with thirst: and Moses was too much troubled himself at their murmurings, and said to God, What shall I do with this

people, they are ready to stone me?" And God was displeased with them, and with Moses himself, for trusting him no better, and showing it by his impatience and complaint: and God bid him go, and with his rod strike the rock of Mount Horeb before the people: and he did, and water flowed out enough for them all.

C. And what was their next trial?

M. Next a people, called Amalek, came and fought against them; and Moses sent Joshua and his men to fight with them. And Moses stood on the hill with the rod of God in his hand, and (he being above fourscore years old) when his hands fell down Amalek prevailed, and while his hands held up Israel prevailed: and Aaron and Hur set him a stone to sit on, and they two held up his hands till sunset, and so Amalek was overthrown by Joshua.

C. What did they next?

M. Next Moses's father-in-law, Jethro, priest of Midian, came to see him, and Moses told him all that God had done; and he saw how Moses was overwhelmed with judging all the people alone, and he advised him to choose able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and set them over thousands, and hundreds, and fifties, and tens, to judge the smaller matters, while Moses inquired of God, and told them his laws, and judged of greater matters, (if God commanded this,) and so Moses did.

C. And what did they next?

M. Next God, by Moses, called all the people, to know whether they would make a covenant with God to obey him for ever, and he would be their God, and take them for his peculiar people above all others on earth. And the people consented, and God and they made a solemn covenant. And when they had promised to obey him, God called Moses up to Mount Sinai, and came, by his angel, in fire and thunder, and the mountain trembled and smoked, and God forbade the people to come near it, but they trembled at the sight and noise: and there God spake to Moses the ten commandments, and then spake to him many other particular laws by which he would rule the people of Israel, which were presently written down. And the people saw as it were the glory of God, and promised to be obedient to all his laws; and so became a settled commonwealth, of which God himself was the lawgiver, and chose him that should be chief commander under him, and entailed the priesthood on

Aaron and his line, and the tribe of Levi. And the Lord kept Moses forty days in the mount, and wrote in two tables of stone the ten commandments.

C. What were these ten commandments ?

M. I will tell you the rest of the history first, and then I will tell you what they are afterward.

C. Sure the people durst not break God's law after such a terrible sight as all this ?

M. No : they did not forbear sinning so long as Moses was in the mount with God : because he stayed forty days, they said we know not what is become of him. And they brought gold to Aaron, and compelled him to make an idol of it in the shape of a calf, and called that their God that brought them out of Egypt, and worshipped it : so bad is man, if God leave him to himself.

C. What became of them for this ?

M. God was offended, and would have destroyed them all presently, but that Moses prayed for them. And when Moses came down and saw their sin, his anger kindled, and he cast down the tables of stone that God had written, and brake them ; and he chid Aaron, and he caused three thousand of the people to be presently killed : and God plagued the people for this golden calf ; and Moses burned it, and cast the dust on the water, and made them drink it. And God made the two tables to be written out anew.

C. And what did they next ?

M. Moses desired to see God, and God hid him in a rock while he showed him a glimpse of his glory at his back parts ; and as he past by, proclaimed his name by which he would be known to all.

C. What was that ?

M. " The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty ; visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."

C. What did they next ?

M. Next God taught them to make a tabernacle, like a tent, which they could carry about, to be as a temple, a place where God would still be sought : and it was made with great art and cost ; and a cloud stood before it ; and there God was sought

by Moses and the priest, and there he told them his mind, and answered them. And in an ark in that tabernacle God made them keep the two tables of stone that were the ten commandments, and a pot of the manna with which God fed them, and Moses' rod with which he did his miracles, that their children after them might see that all those things were true.

C. What did they next?

M. When God, by Moses, had delivered them all his laws, a wilderness life was hard; and the people complained, and God was offended, and sent a fire that burnt up some of them, till Moses prayed.

But after this they grew weary of eating manna, having no other meat, and their appetite longed for flesh, or other meat; and they again murmured against Moses: and Moses grew impatient of their murmurings, and prayed God to set some other over them, and not leave all this burden upon him; and God bid Moses call threescore and ten of the elders, that had been officers over the people, and bring them to the door of the tabernacle, and there God spake to Moses, and took of the spirit (of power) which was on Moses, and put on them, and so made them partners with Moses in the government. And then God gave the people flesh, but with his wrath, because they lusted, and were not content with his provision.

C. What was it he gave them?

M. He told them they should have flesh a whole month together, till they loathed it: and Moses said, they are six hundred thousand men, and whence shall they have flesh? And God said, is my hand shortened? And God made a wind from the sea bring quails, that fell all about them, and a day's journey round them, and they lay a yard thick upon the ground, and the people gathered them for meat. But while the flesh was in their mouths, God sent a plague among them, which killed many of the murmurers.

C. What did they next?

M. Moses married an Ethiopian woman (a black), perhaps to typify that the God of the Israelites would also be the God of other nations, and call them. And Miriam, Moses' sister, and Aaron his brother, murmured, and spake against him for it: and God was offended, and struck Miriam with a leprosy, but Moses prayed, and God restored her in seven days.

C. What did they after this?

M. When they drew towards the land of Canaan, which God

had promised to give them, Moses chose twelve men out of the twelve tribes, to go as spies unknown, and see what a land it was, and to bring the people word. So they were forty days searching the land, and when they returned, ten of them discouraged all the people, and told them it was a good land, but the cities were walled, and the people many and strong, and giants among them, and they should never be able to overcome them. But two of them, Caleb and Joshua, brought of the grapes, and told them it was an excellent land, and the people of it would be but as bread to them, and bid them fear not God would deliver them into their hands. But the people believed the other ten, before these two, and were frightened, and mutinied more than ever, even against God himself, for bringing them, and their wives, and children to be destroyed by the sword; and wished they had died in Egypt; and they consulted of making them a captain to go back to Egypt; and when Caleb and Joshua would have encouraged them, they cried out, "Stone them." And in this rebellion the glory of God appeared at the tabernacle; and God said, "How long will this people provoke me, and not believe me for all the signs that I have done among them?" and God was about to destroy them all with the plague, had not Moses stopped it by earnest prayer. But God decreed that never one of them should enter into that land, save Caleb and Joshua, and their children that were but twenty years old, but that they should all die in the wilderness for their unbelief, and murmuring; yea, even Moses and Aaron: but their children should possess it.

And the ten men that had searched the land, and disheartened the people, all died presently of the plague.

C. What did the people then?

M. When they heard God's sentence, that all above twenty years old should wander forty years in the wilderness, and there die, then they mourned, and repented of their mutiny, when it was too late, and then they would needs go suddenly, and fight to get the land. But Moses forbade them, and told them, now God was against their going, and if they went they should be overthrown: but they obeyed not God (for they would go when God forbade them), and they were beaten by their enemies.

C. What did they then?

M. Worse and worse: then Korah a Levite, with Dathan, and Abiram, two great men, got two hundred and fifty chief men to join with them; and they drew the people into rebellion

against Moses and Aaron, and accused them of deceiving and destroying the people; and said they took too much upon them for Moses to make himself their prince, and Aaron priest, when all the congregation were God's people, as well as they: and said they promised them a good land, and performed nothing, but brought them to perish in the wilderness; and would put out the people's eyes. When Moses heard this, and saw the rebellion, he bid Korah, and his Levites, come and offer incense to God, and Aaron should do so too, and God would show which of them he had chosen.

Then God offered to destroy them all, but Moses prayed to him to spare the people: then God sent him to tell Dathan and Abiram what God would do to them, and to charge all the people to get far enough from them, unless they would die with them: and as soon as Moses had spoken, the ground opened, and swallowed up these leaders, and their wives and children, and all that belonged to them; and then the earth closed up again. And the people ran away at their cry, lest the earth should also swallow up them. And the two hundred and fifty that were to offer incense were all burnt up as they offered, by a fire from the Lord.

C. Sure they would take warning after all this?

M. No, the next day all the congregations got together against Moses, and said, you have killed the people of the Lord. Then God again offered to kill them all, and sent a plague, but Moses prayed to God and stopped it: but the plague first killed fourteen thousand and seven hundred rebels.

C. What a wicked people was this; had God no better people in the world than these?

M. No; all the rest of the nations were worse: by them we may see what a blind mind, and naughty heart, is in us and all men, till God's grace sanctify us: they judged by their own blind reason, and their selfish interest, as most men do.

C. Did this quiet them, and make them obedient?

M. When they saw that there was no remedy, they cried out 'We all die, we perish; God kills us all that come near the tabernacle;' instead of bewailing their own sin.

And to convince the murmurers, whom God had chosen to rule them, God bade Moses call twelve chief men of the twelve tribes, and bade every man bring a rod (or wand) and lay them all in the tabernacle, and Aaron's rod had his name written on it: and in the morning they found that Aaron's rod (and no other) did

spring forth with buds, and blossoms, and almonds; to show them whom God did choose.

C. Were they quiet after this?

M. Then God made them turn back into the wilderness, and they came again to a place that had no water; and they again murmured against Moses and Aaron, as promise-breakers, and said they had brought them to a place that had neither seed, fruit, nor water; and wished they had been killed with the rebels, or died in Egypt: so hard is it to be patient in suffering, and to trust God when no outward help is seen.

Then God bade Moses strike the rock as formerly, and plenty of water gushed out. But Moses and Aaron did not there honour God, by so strong a faith as they should have done; for God told them that they should die in the wilderness; and Aaron died shortly after.

C. What did they then?

M. The Edomites would not let them pass through their country, so that they were fain to go a great way about. And then some Canaanites fought with them; but God gave Israel the victory, and they destroyed king Arad, and his cities.

But again, they were impatient with the long way, and having so many years no bread but manna, and they murmured against Moses for bringing them out of Egypt, to die by famine, in a wilderness. Then God sent fiery serpents among them, that stung many of them to death; and then they repented and begged for mercy: and God bade Moses make the likeness of a serpent in brass, and set it upon a pole; and every one that was stung was cured, when he looked upon the brazen serpent, which was a type of Christ.

C. What did they next?

M. When they had long travelled, Sihon, king of the Amorites in Heshbon, and Og, king of Bashan, would not let them go through their country, but fought with them; and God delivered them and their cities to the Israelites, and they killed them, and possessed their land: and now they had some place besides a wilderness to dwell in: but this was in the way to the promised land, the river Jordan being between it and them.

C. What did they next?

M. The land of Moab was near them, and the king called Balak, was afraid of the Israelites; and there was a man called Balaam, not far off, that could prophesy, and king Balak sent some lords to him to entreat him to come and curse the

Israelites, that he might hope to overcome them; and he would give him great rewards. Balaam bid them stay all night, and in the morning he would answer them. And in the night God charged Balaam not to go with them, nor curse Israel, for God would bless them. So Balaam gave them their answer, and sent them away. But king Balak sent other greater men, and offered him greater things if he would come. He told them, that if they would give him a house full of silver and gold, he could not go beyond the word of the Lord; but bid them stay till morning for their answer. And in the night God bid him go with them, but be sure to say nothing but what God put into his mouth; so he went with them. But because his heart was to have got the money and honour by cursing Israel, if God would suffer him, therefore God sent an angel that stood with a sword in his way: his ass saw the angel, and Balaam did not; and the ass went out of the way to pass by the angel, and Balaam beat his ass: then the angel stood in a narrower way between two walls, and the ass hurt his foot up to the wall, to go by the angel; and Balaam beat the ass again. Then the angel stood in so narrow a way that there was no passage by; and then the ass lay down, and Balaam beat him again, and God made the ass to speak, and reprove Balaam for striking him. And God opened Balaam's eyes to see the angel, and when the angel reproved him, he offered to turn back again; but God bid him go on, but be sure to say but what he bid him. And when he was come, king Balak met him, and told him his desire, and took him to a high hill, that he might see Israel and curse them. And Balaam caused seven altars to be there built, and offered sacrifice on every one, to hear what God would bid him say. And God made him pronounce a blessing on Israel, instead of a curse. And king Balak was angry with him for blessing them that he called him to curse. And he brought him to another hill, and built seven altars also there, and sacrificed; and God made him bless them from thence yet more. And king Balak took him to another hill, and there they built seven altars, and sacrificed; but there God made Balaam prophesy of all the prosperity of Israel, and bless them more. And the king was in a rage and bid him be gone; God had kept him from honour.

C. What did the people after this?

M. They sinned again: when they saw the women of Moab, they began to commit whoredom with them; and these women tempted them to come to the service of their idols, or false

gods; and so the Israelites were tempted to do as they saw the idolaters do: and God was offended, and commanded to kill them: and Phinehas, the priest's son, killed one man and woman; and the plague ceased when it had killed four-and-twenty thousand. Yea, God made Moses make war against the Midianites, whose women had tempted the people to whoredom and idolatry; and they killed five of their kings, and burnt their cities, and took all that they had, and brought away the women and children. And Moses made them kill all the male children, and every woman that had lain with a man, and so revenge that sin.

C. What else was done by them?

M. God made Moses to set Joshua to be chief ruler in his place when he was dead; and gave commandment that all the Canaanites, whose land God would give Israel, should be killed; because they had been idolaters, and committed all manner of wickedness, which God would revenge, and not forgive.

C. And what came next?

M. Last of all, Moses repeated God's laws, and left them written for the people, and gave to two tribes and a half their inheritance in the land that he had taken on that side Jordan; and God called him up to mount Nebo, to die, at six-score years old, and God buried him; and Joshua was to bring them over Jordan, into the rest of the promised land.

The Eleventh Lesson.—Joshua's Conquest of Canaan.

C. What did God do with them when Moses was dead?

M. God made Joshua their captain, and charged him to be courageous, and obey his law, and promised to be with him. Jericho being the first city that Joshua was to take, he sent spies to search it: and a woman called Rahab, believing that God would give it them, hid them; and she and all her friends with her were therefore spared. But they must first pass over the river Jordan, where God confirmed their faith by a miracle, like that at the Red Sea: as soon as the priests that bare the ark touched the waters, they divided, and stood on an heap, till the Israelites were all past over on dry ground. And Joshua set up twelve great stones, that their posterity might believe it.

C. And how did they take Jericho?

M. First, Joshua and all the people renewed their covenant with God, and circumcised all the males; (for they had not been circumcised in the wilderness, of forty years, that were born there;) and celebrated the passover, and then they had

manna no more, but eat of the corn of the land. And God sent an angel to Joshua, to bid him go round about the city six days with the ark, by seven priests, and blow trumpets made of rams' horns; and the seventh day go seven times, and the walls should fall down: and so they did. And God made them kill all the people, save Rahab and her company, and burn all their goods, save the gold, silver, and brass, for God's treasure; and they did so.

But one man, called Achan, was covetous; and when he saw a wedge of gold, and a rich garment, he stole and hid them, which cost them dear.

C. Why, what came of it?

M. They went next to take a city called Ai, but God left them, and the men of Ai beat them; and then their hearts were down, and Joshua lamented, and prayed to God; and God told him there was sin among them, and he would be with them no more till the sinner were destroyed. So Joshua called them together, and cast lots, and the lot found out Achan; and he confessed it, and he and his sons and daughters, his cattle, the stolen gold and silver, and all that he had, they burnt, when they had stoned him; and so God's wrath was turned away.

C. This seemed but a little fault?

M. It is no little fault to break the law of God wilfully. Afterward they conquered Ai. But the Gibeonites saved themselves by craft: they sent ambassadors to Joshua with old shoes and clothes, who told him they dwelt in so far a country, that their clothes were worn out in coming to him, and that they came to make a league with him; so Joshua believed them, and swore a league with them. And when he knew that they were Canaanites that had deceived him, he durst not break his oath, but made them servants. And after this many kings, for fear, joined together, and fought against Joshua and Gibeon, and Joshua overcame them; and God rained great hailstones on them, and killed many. And Joshua prayed that the sun might not go down till they had been avenged on their enemies; and so the sun and moon (or the light at least) staid a whole day extraordinary: and Joshua killed the five kings, and took many cities. Then many other kings joined to fight against Israel (for most great cities had their kings in those times), and God gave them all, and their cities and lands, into Joshua's hands; and then Joshua divided the land among

them, to every tribe their part by lot. And at Shiloh they set up God's tabernacle, where they were to inquire of his will : but much of the promised land was much unconquered. And Joshua rehearsed to the people all God's mercies, and exhorted them to obey his laws, and so died at an hundred-and-ten years old. And Israel obeyed God, and prospered, all the days of Joshua, and while the elders lived, that with Joshua had seen the wonders of God.

The Twelfth Lesson.—The History of the Judges after Joshua.

C. What did they when Joshua was dead ?

M. God sent them to conquer and possess the rest of the land, but commanded them to drive out all the Canaanites, and other old inhabitants, and make no league with them, lest they should draw Israel to worship their false gods, and learn their wicked customs. But the Israelites did not obey God, but were contented to make most of the Canaanites tributaries to them, and suffered them to dwell among them, because they met with difficulties in conquering them. For this, God was offended, and sent an angel to tell them that these Canaanites that dwelt among them, should henceforth be thorns in their sides, and a tempting snare to them. And so it proved.

C. Why, what came of it ?

M. When the old men were dead, another generation sprung up, that knew not the Lord, nor the wonders that he had done for Israel. And they were tempted by the Canaanites to worship their idols, and forsake the Lord ; and God forsook them, and gave the Canaanites power against them, to overcome them, and make them servants. But when affliction made them repent, then God sent a judge to deliver them. And when the judge was dead, they turned to idolatry and sin again.

C. Who were these judges ?

M. First God gave the king of Mesopotamia a victory over the Israelites, and they were eight years his servants. Then they cried to God, and he sent Othniel, Caleb's brother's son, to be their captain ; and he delivered them, and they had quietness forty years. Then they fell to sin again, and God gave them up to Eglon, king of Moab, eighteen years. Then they cried to God for help, and he raised up one Ehud, who took on him to bring the king a present, and stabbed him, and escaped, and raised the Israelites in arms, and killed ten thousand Moabites ; and after this they were quiet fourscore years. And after him

rose up Shamgar, and slew many of the Philistines that had afflicted them. When Ehud was dead they fell to sin again ; and God gave them to Jabin, king of Hazor, who oppressed them twenty years. Then Deborah, a woman prophetess, judged them, and she called Barak to be their captain : and she and Barak conquered Sisera's general ; and he fled and hid himself in the tent of Jael a woman, who spake him fair, and laid him to sleep, and then struck a nail in his head, and killed him. Then they were quiet forty years.

But they turned to sin again, and God gave them up to the Midianites and Amalekites, that destroyed their fields, and took their cattle : then they cried to God again, and God sent first a prophet to reprove them, and next an angel to deliver them ; and the angel appeared to Gideon, and made him captain : but Gideon was afraid, till God wrought a miracle to encourage him ; and God gave him a victory with a very few men. The Midianites fled, and killed one another ; and Oreb and Zeeb, two of their princes, were slain, and an hundred-and-twenty thousand, and Zeba and Zalmunna, their kings. Then they had rest forty years. But when Gideon was dead, they worshipped the idol Baal again.

C. Who ruled them next ?

M. Gideon had threescore-and-ten sons, by several wives, and one (Abimelek) by a concubine. This one son enticed the men of the city of Shechem to make him their king ; and he went and killed all his brethren, except Jotham, who escaped. But God revenged the murder, and the men of Shechem turned against him, and one Gaal led them, and he destroyed them that made him king, and their city : and when he attempted to burn them that fled to a tower at Thebez, a woman cast down a piece of a millstone on his head ; and when he saw he must die, he made his armour-bearer kill him.

After him Tola judged Israel twenty-and-three years. After him Jair twenty-two years. But the Israelites forsook God, and served the idol gods of all the countries about them. And God gave the Philistines and Ammonites power to oppress part of them eighteen years. Then they cried to God for help, and God reprov'd them for their sin, and threatened to deliver them no more, and bid them go cry to their idols to help them. But they confessed their sins, and put away their idols, and begged God this once to save them : and God raised

up Jephtha, and he was their captain, to fight against the king of Ammon, and had the victory. But a rash vow troubled him.

C. What was that?

M. He vowed to God, if he would give him the victory, that he would offer as a sacrifice the first thing that met him out of his house; and his daughter came with joy to meet him, which grieved him; but by her consent he kept his vow. And a greater mischief followed than this: when the men of Ephraim saw that Jephtha had conquered the Ammonites, they mutinied against him in pride, because he had not called them with him, insomuch that it came to a war, and forty-two thousand Ephraimites were killed.

C. What came next?

M. When Jephtha had ruled six years, he died. Then Ibzan ruled seven years, and died. Then Elon ruled ten years, and died. Then Abdon ruled eight years, and died. Then Israel fell to sin again, and God gave the Philistines power over them.

C. How were they delivered then?

M. Then there was a man named Manoah, and his wife was barren; and God sent an angel to promise her a son that should deliver Israel. The Angel appeared twice to them; and when they sacrificed, he went up from them in the flame: so God gave them a son called Sampson, who had the strength of many men; and he judged Israel twenty years, and slew many of the Philistines, but at last was betrayed into their hands by an harlot that he fell in love with: and they took him and put out his eyes; and at one of their great meetings they sent for him to make sport with him. But he prayed to God for strength, and pulled down two great pillars of the house, near which they set him, and the house fell and killed their lords, and more people with him than he had killed in his life.

C. Who judged them next?

M. They were long after this without any judge, but not without sin and punishment; for a Levite and his wife lodging in Gibeah, a city of Benjamin, some wicked men abused his wife to death: and he cut her body into twelve pieces, and sent them to all the tribes of Israel, to summon them to come and revenge her death; and the foolish Benjamites revenged the malefactors, and the rest of the tribes went to war against

them, in which were slain forty thousand Israelites, and twenty-five thousand Benjamites, and the city burnt: such is the fruit of sin.

C. Who judged them after this?

M. They had long no king or judge, but were in much subjection to the Philistines; but they had priests, that in Shiloh waited at the tabernacle and sacrificed, and inquired for them of God. And Eli being then chief priest, he had two sons, called Hophni and Phinehas, priests under him, that were very wicked men, and oppressed and robbed the sacrifices, and lay with the women that assembled at the tabernacle door, so that God's worship grew contemptible, and the priests and offerings were loathed by the people: and Eli their father reprov'd his sons, but did not punish them as God required; and God was greatly displeas'd with him and them. And there was a woman named Hannah, the wife of Elkanah, that had no child, and earnestly begged for a child of God, and vowed to dedicate him to God. So God gave her a son called Samuel; and she dedicated him to serve God at the tabernacle: and God sent a prophet to old Eli to denounce God's judgment against his sons, and against him for suffering them. And while Samuel was yet but a youth, God in a vision called to him by his name, and he thought it had been Eli, and went to him; and when he told him that he called him not, he lay down again; and God called him again; and he went to Eli, and said, "Thou didst call me:" then Eli perceived that it was a vision, and bid him next say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Then God told Samuel of all the punishment he would bring on Eli and his sons, and how he would cast out his house. And Samuel was loth to tell it to Eli till he urg'd him. Then Eli said, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." And shortly after God destroyed them as he had threatened.

C. How did he destroy them?

M. The Philistines fought against Israel, and killed at first four thousand of them. Then the Israelites fetch'd God's ark from Shiloh, and took it with them when they went to fight, thinking that God would deliver them for his ark's sake; like foolish people now, that think God will save wicked men for the outside of religion: but the Philistines killed thirty thousand of them, and also took the ark of God; and the two wicked priests, Hophni and Phinehas, were killed. And when old Eli

heard all this, especially that the ark was taken, he fell off his seat with grief, and broke his neck, and died at ninety-eight years old, when he had judged Israel forty years.

C. And what became of the ark after this ?

M. The Philistines carried it away in triumph, and set it up by their idol called Dagon (which was an image). But in the morning Dagon was fallen on his face before the ark : then they set up their image in its place again ; but the next morning they found him fallen again, and the head and hands broken off. And God smote the men of that city with a sore disease ; and they would keep the ark no longer, but sent it away to another city. Then God struck the men of that city also with the same disease, called the emerods ; then that city sent it away to another city ; but that city was afraid, and durst not keep it ; and when it had been seven months, they advised with their wizards what to do with it ; and they bid them send it home again to Israel, but send it not empty, but gold cast into the shape of the emerods and mice that afflicted them. And they bid them take two kine that had calves, and had never been yoked, and put them to draw the ark in a new cart, and keep the calves at home, and leave them to go which way they would ; for if they went from their calves towards Israel, then they might be sure it was God that afflicted them : and so they did ; and the kine went straight to the Israelites with the ark, but lowing as they went, for their calves. And the men of Bethshemesh (a town of Israel) rejoiced when they saw the ark, and they offered the two kine in sacrifice to God. But the men of Bethshemesh did irreverently presume to look into the ark, which they ought not to do, and God killed many thousands of them ; and they were afraid, and sent away the ark to another city, where it stayed twenty years.

C. Who judged Israel all this while ?

M. Samuel : for God made him a holy prophet, and all the people saw that God had chosen him. And Samuel called them all to fast and pray, and put away all their idol images, and God was reconciled to them ; and the Philistines came again to fight against them, and Samuel prayed, and God destroyed the Philistines with thunder and with the sword ; and they came no more against Israel all the days of Samuel.

C. And who ruled them after Samuel ?

M. When Samuel was very old, he made his sons judges, and

they proved not like their father, but were covetous, and took bribes; and the people were weary of them, and they desired to have a king, like other countries, which displeased God.

C. Why was God displeased at this?

M. It was their happiness, above all other nations, to be ruled so by God himself, that as he made their laws, so he chose their rulers and judges by prophets, or visions, or heavenly revelation, or inspiration, as it pleased him: but the people would needs have a king that should have greater power than the judges, and should rule them by force, and leave the crown to his successors, like other nations: so that it was a departing from God's prophetic and extraordinary government, and this on their own heads, without God's call or warrant. They should have made no such change without God's consent and conduct. It was he, and not they, that should appoint their government. But of their kings I will tell you more the next time.

The Thirteenth Lesson.—The History of King Saul.

C. Who was the first king of Israel?

M. Saul.

C. How came he to be king?

M. The people rebelliously, without God, came and told Samuel they would have a king like other nations: and Samuel was displeased at it; and he prayed to God, and God said, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them:" yet God bid him hearken to them, and let their own will be their punishment, and tell them what should be the manner of their king, that he would make their sons and daughters his servants, and make them do his work, and take tythes of them for his servants, and that then they should cry out, because of the king which they had chosen, and the Lord will not hear them. But the people were set upon it, and would have a king.

C. Why? Should there not be such kings as these?

M. While they might have been free, they should have chosen it rather, and continued under God's prophetic government, without such servitude. But where God appoints such, they must be obeyed.

C. And how was Saul chosen?

M. Saul was the goodliest proper man in Israel, higher from the shoulders upward than any of the people. And his father's

asses being lost, he came to Samuel the prophet, to know of him what was become of them : and God told Samuel, "This is the man that shall be king, and fight against the Philistines." And Samuel anointed Saul, and told him who should meet him in the way, and what signs he should see, and how he should prophesy among the prophets ; which all came to pass. And he bid Saul go to Gilgal, and tarry seven days, till he came to him to offer sacrifice. And God gave Saul another spirit. Then Samuel called the people together, and told them, that they had rejected God in choosing to have a king, but bid them all come and see whom God would choose by a lot : and the lot chose Saul, but he hid himself, and they found him out, and made him king ; and God moved the hearts of many to follow and obey him. After this the king of Ammon came in war against them, and would not make peace with them, unless they would have their right eyes put out for a reproach and mark of servitude. But God stirred up Saul, and he called all Israel together, and fought with the Ammonites, and destroyed them. Then they settled Saul in the kingdom. But Samuel called them, and appealed to God and them, whether ever he had taken ox or ass from them, or defrauded or oppressed any, or taken any bribe ; and he preached to them, and told them, that if they would not keep God's commandments, his hand would be against them : and that they might know God spake by him, they should suddenly see it witnessed by thunder and rain (at an unusual time) : so it did so thunder and rain, that the people were humbled, and believed him, "That their wickedness was great in the sight of the Lord," in asking a king. And they feared, and desired Samuel to pray to God not to destroy them, confessing that they had added this to all their sins, to ask a king. And Samuel promised to pray for them, though they had done this wickedness, and told them God would not yet forsake them, if they would fear God, and serve him with all their heart : but if they would still do wickedly, both they and their king should be consumed.

C. And how did Saul rule them ?

M. When he had been king two years, he kept three thousand soldiers with him, and his son Jonathan ; and Jonathan smote a garrison of the Philistines, who thereupon gathered so huge an army against Israel as put the people into great fear ; so that they hid themselves in caves, and thickets, and rocks ; and they that were with Saul trembled : and Samuel not com-

ing, as he appointed, in seven days, to offer sacrifice and prayer to God, Saul ventured to do it without him, when he saw the people scattered from him. And then Samuel came and reprov'd him, and told him God would choose another king, because he had thus disobey'd God ; for it did not belong to him to sacrifice.

C. Sure Saul thought he did well: was not this a little fault ?

M. God must be carefully obey'd ; and thinking we do well will not save us, if we will venture to do ill. So there did but six hundred men stay with Saul ; and the Philistines had so master'd Israel, that they let them have no smith in all the land, and no one but Saul and Jonathan had so much as a sword or spear.

And one day only Jonathan and his armour-bearer went up to a garrison of the Philistines, and killed twenty men ; and God sent a terror among all the rest, and they trembled, and fought against each other ; and the Israelites that were hid came out and fell upon them. But Saul, in a blind zeal, said, " Cursed be the man that eateth any food till evening, that I may be avenged of mine enemies." And the people were all faint ; and Jonathan heard not when his father charg'd the people with the oath ; and he saw some honey, and, eating some, was refresh'd. But the people were so hungry that, after the victory, they ran upon the spoil, and did kill and eat things raw, with the blood ; and Saul reprov'd them for the sin. And he inquir'd of God whether they should again pursue the Philistines, and God answer'd him not : then he thought that some one had brok'e the oath of fasting, and he cast lots to know who it was, and the lot took his son Jonathan : and Saul vow'd he should die, to keep his oath ; but the people swore he should not die, and so deliver'd him. After this, God sent Samuel to command Saul to go fight against the country call'd Amalek, and to kill man and woman, oxen and sheep, camels and asses, because they were wicked men, and had fought against Israel coming out of Egypt ; and Saul obey'd not : he went and conquer'd the Amalekites, and took their king, Agag, prisoner, and brought away the best of the sheep and cattle, and killed none but the worst. And for this disobedience God sent Samuel to reprove him, for saving the king, and the sheep, and the oxen, which he should have killed : but Saul said he had done as God bid him, save that the people saved the best of the sheep and oxen to

offer to God in sacrifice. But Samuel told him that obedience was better than sacrifice, and rebellion against God's command was as the sin of witchcraft and idolatry; and he told him for this God had taken the kingdom from him, and would give it to one that was better than he. So Samuel killed Agag; and he came no more to Saul, but mourned for him to the last.

C. Was it not better to save the sheep and oxen than kill them: why should they be lost? Sure this was a very little sin: would not God forgive thus much?

M. It is not a small sin for a man to set his reason and will against God's: God is the owner of all things, and may do what he will with his own; and he knows what is good or evil better than we do. We must not do what we think best, but what God thinks best. And kings must be examples of obedience to God, to all their subjects, or else their sin is worse than others.

C. And what became of Saul after this?

M. God sent Samuel to anoint one of the sons of Jesse, of Bethlehem; and he was to cover it with going thither to sacrifice, lest Saul should know it, and kill him. Jesse had eight sons; and when Samuel called seven of them, one by one, God told him that none of these were the man that he had chosen. There was no more but the youngest, keeping sheep, which was David; and when they sent for him, God said to Samuel, "This is he:" so Samuel anointed him to be king afterward. Upon this, the Spirit of the Lord came upon David; but it departed from Saul, and an evil spirit had power from God to terrify and trouble him, as a melancholy man. And Saul's servants persuaded him to seek out a good musician, that could play well upon the harp, to drive away the trouble of his spirit; and they chose David (not knowing that Samuel had anointed him) and when the evil spirit troubled Saul, it departed when David played on the harp; and Saul loved him, and made him his armour-bearer a while.

C. And what did he with him after?

M. David went home again to keep sheep, till Saul had forgot him. And after this the Philistines came to fight against Israel; and when the two armies were near, Goliath, a Philistine giant, that was stronger than many men, dared the Israelites to send a man to fight with him, and he that got the better should carry the day with the whole armies. And the Israelites feared him, and none of them durst fight with him. And Saul offered to give his daughter to wife, and great riches,

to him that could conquer Goliath: and David's brethren being in the army, he brought them provision; and hearing what was said, he offered to fight with Goliath; but Saul told him he was not able, being but a youth, to fight with a giant bred up to war. But David answered him, "That while he kept his father's sheep, there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb, and he went after him, and killed the lion and the bear, and rescued the lamb; and he believed that God would make this Philistine like one of them, seeing he had defied the army of the living God." So Saul bid him go, and put on him his armour, a helmet of brass, and a coat of mail, and his sword; but David put them off, and said, "I cannot go with these, for I have not proved them." And he took his staff and sling, and took five smooth stones out of the brook, and drew near Goliath, who despised him, and said, "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?" And he cursed him by his gods, and told him he would give his flesh to birds and beasts. But David said, "I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, and the Lord will deliver thee into my hand." And David did sling a stone, which sunk into his forehead, and he fell down dead; and David, with Goliath's own sword, cut off his head; and the Philistines fled; and David brought the head to Jerusalem, and kept the armour.

C. And what reward had David for this?

M. Saul took him to his house, and would let him go home no more; and Jonathan, Saul's son, loved David as his own soul, and gave him his very garments, his sword and bow; and they two made a covenant of dearest friendship. And Saul set him over the men of war; but women in their songs said, "Saul hath killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands." And this turned the proud heart of Saul into envy and jealousy against him, (for he did not know that Samuel had anointed David,) and from that day Saul sought to kill him. And when he next fell into his mad fit, by an evil spirit, and David played on his harp, Saul sought to kill him with his javelin; but David avoided him. Then Saul made him captain of a thousand, that he might fall by the enemies; and he gave him Michal his daughter to wife, to be a snare to him, on condition he would bring him an hundred foreskins of the Philistines. And David and his men killed two hundred, and he married Saul's daughter.

Then Saul was more afraid of David, and spake to Jona-

than, and to all his servants, to kill David; but Jonathan awhile appeased his father's wrath, till more war arose, and David got more honour by slaying the Philistines; and then Saul in his disturbed fit of melancholy, attempted again to kill David, as he was playing before him; and when he escaped, he sent after him to kill him in his own house; but Michal, his wife, let him down through a window, and put an image in his bed; and when Saul bid them bring him to him, that he might kill him, he saw how his daughter had deceived him. Then David fled and dwelt with old Samuel in Ramah; and Saul sent men to fetch him thence; and when they came, they found Samuel, and many prophets, prophesying, and the Spirit of God came on the messengers, and they prophesied with them. Then Saul sent other messengers to fetch him; and when they came, they prophesied as the first. Then he sent others the third time, and those prophesied too. Then he went himself, and before he came thither, the spirit of prophecy fell upon him, and he stripped himself naked, and prophesied among them.

C. I thought none had been prophets, and had God's Spirit, but good men?

M. None but good men are made good and godly by God's Spirit; but others may prophesy, and do miracles.

C. And what did Saul and David then?

M. David fled to Jonathan, who pleaded for him to his father, till his father reviled him for defending David against his own hope of the kingdom, as his heir. And Saul sought to kill David again; but Jonathan told David of all his father's purposes, and saved him. Then David fled to Ahimelech, the priest, and made him believe he was sent of business by the king: and Ahimelech, having no other, gave him of the consecrated bread, and Goliath's sword, and he fled to a Philistine king, to Gath. But Doeg, a servant of Saul, saw all this, and told Saul; and Saul sent for the priests, and charged them of confederating with a rebel, or not telling him when David fled, and commanded his guard to kill the priests; but they would not do it. But Doeg, when the king bade him, killed fourscore and five of them for this.

C. And what did David among the Philistines?

M. He heard them tell their king how many of them he had killed, and he was afraid, and took on him to be a mad man, and the king turned him away. And he got again into Israel; and his kindred, and all that were in debt, and discontented,

came to him, and he became their captain, and had about four hundred men. And he got the king of Moab to receive his father and mother, and being warned by a prophet, he went into the country of Judah. And Saul destroyed the whole city of Nob, men, women, and children, where the priests dwelt, because Ahimelech gave David bread; but Abiathar, one of Ahimelech's sons, escaped to David, and was his priest. After this the Philistines fought against a town called Keilah, and God bid David go and deliver them; and he went and conquered the Philistines, and delivered Keilah. Then Saul thought to besiege, and take David in, Keilah; but David inquired of God, by the priest, whether the men of Keilah would give him into the hands of Saul; and God said, "They will." So David, with six hundred men, fled from thence to a wood in the wilderness, and Saul hunted after him; but Jonathan came secretly to David, and encouraged him, and made a covenant with him, knowing he would be king. Then the men of Ziph told Saul where David was, and offered to deliver him to him, and Saul was glad, and pursued him hard; but then the Philistines invaded the land, and Saul was fain first to go fight with them. And after that he pursued David again; and as he hunted him on the craggy mountains, Saul found a great cave, into which he went for his ease, and David and his men were in the inside of the cave; and David's men persuaded him now to kill Saul, but he said, "God forbid that I should lay my hand on the Lord's anointed!" only he secretly cut off some of his robe. And when Saul was gone out, he called to him from the hill, and showed him how his life was in his hand, and pleaded with him why he sought his life, that intended him no hurt. Then Saul relented, and confessed his fault, and said, now he knew David would be king after him; and made him enter into an oath, that he would not cut off his seed after him; and so they parted.

C. What did David then?

M. He durst not trust Saul, but kept with his men in the wilderness, where they wanted food; and there was near a rich man, called Nabal, that had a great feast for his sheepshearers, and David sent his men to ask him for some part of his provision; but Nabal answered them with reproach, and asked why he should give his provisions to fugitives, whom he knew not. And David at this was over angry, and rashly swore that he would destroy him and all his; but his wife Abigail was a dis-

creet woman, and perceived their danger, and went out with some servants, and met David with provision, and appeased him; and David thanked God, and her that had kept him from rash shedding blood. And when she came back to Nabal, he was drunk at his great feast, and she told him nothing till the morning, and then she told him all; and it struck him to the heart, and ten days after he died; and David took Abigail to be his wife. After this, Saul again pursued David in the wilderness, near Ziph; and David from a mountain saw Saul's camp, and where he lay, and in the night, he and Abishai came secretly into the camp, and they were all in a deep sleep; and David came to Saul, and took away his spear and cruse, and went his way. Abishai would have had leave to kill him, but David said, "God forbid; let us stay till he die; let God's hands do it, and not mine."

Then David again pleaded with Saul from the hill; and Saul again relented, and confessed his fault.

But David being weary to be thus hunted, went again with his six hundred men to Achish, a Philistine king of Gath. And he received him, and gave him a town called Ziklag, where he dwelt a year and four months. And David went out with his soldiers, and smote many places of the Amalekites, and other people, and killed them all, and brought away their cattle, and made king Achish believe he had smitten the Israelites, and so was hateful to his own country, that he might trust him.

C. Was it well done of David to tell so many lies?

M. No; he did ill, and we must not imitate him in this, God forbade it by his law, and did not justify David in it, though he had mercy on him. After this, the Philistines gathered an army against Saul, and David was to go with them, and Saul was afraid of them, and Samuel was dead; and Saul inquired of God what he should do, but God gave him no answer. And Saul heard of a witch, or conjuring woman, at Endor, and he masked himself, and went to her unknown, to know his fortune. And he desired her to raise up Samuel; and she caused the shape of Samuel to appear to him, which told him that he and his sons should to-morrow be with him, and Israel be overthrown; and so it came to pass Saul and Jonathan were killed.

C. What did David do the while?

M. He would have gone out with the Philistines, but the Lord durst not trust him, but sent him back; and so God kept him out of that battle. But when David was absent, the

Amalekites took Ziklag, and burnt it, and took David's wives, and his soldiers' wives and children, which so grieved their hearts that, in their rage, his men talked of stoning David ; but he pursued the Amalekites, and overtook them, and recovered all the captives again, and took all the spoil, and destroyed all the Amalekites. But David's kingdom must be told you next.

The Fourteenth Lesson.—The Kingdom of David.

M. When the battle was over, an Amalekite came to David, and thought to please him by telling him that Saul and Jonathan were dead ; and that Saul, leaning on his spear, wounded, prayed this man to kill him ; and that he did it, and brought his crown and bracelet to David. But David, instead of rewarding him, caused him to be put to death, for killing the Lord's anointed. And he greatly lamented that overthrow, and made a song of lamentation, especially for Jonathan. And God bid David go to Hebron, in Judah, and there they made him king of Judah ; but Saul's captain, Abner, and the most of Israel, made Ishbosheth, a son of Saul's, their king. And thus some years the kingdom was divided, till, after long war, Ishbosheth angered Abner, the general, and he vowed to deliver up the kingdom to David : and he came to him to do it ; but Joab, David's captain, killed Abner, because he had killed a brother of his : but David detested and lamented the fact. Then two other of Ishbosheth's captains murdered him, and brought his head to David, thinking to be rewarded by him ; and he charged them for the murder. Then all Israel made David king. He reigned over Judah only seven years and a half, and over all Israel thirty-three years.

C. And what did he after he was king of all ?

M. First, he took Mount Zion from the Jebusites of Jerusalem. Then he twice overthrew the Philistines that came against him in battle : and then he fetched the ark of God from the house of Abinadab, in Gibeah, where it had long stayed ; and oxen drew it on a cart ; and when the oxen stumbled, Uzzah, one of Abinadab's sons, put forth his hand to hold the ark, and God struck him dead in the place for his rashness.

C. Why, what great harm was that ?

M. The ark was holy, and God would have none presume to meddle with it, but by his appointment. And by this God teacheth us that he will be trusted himself with his worship ; and men must not pretend to save it from supposed dangers by their

own wit, and will, and way, but only by his appointed means and way.

C. And what did they then with the ark?

M. David was displeased that God killed Uzzah, and was afraid, and durst not receive it, but brought it to the house of Obed-Edom. But when he heard that God blessed Obed-Edom's house because of the ark, then he sent again, and with great music, and dancing, and joy, brought it to Mount Zion. And when David lived in peace, he purposed to build an house, or temple, for the tabernacle and ark, and the solemn worship of God. But God forbade him, by the prophet Nathan, but promised to build him an house, and that his seed should succeed him on his throne, and not be cut off as the seed of Saul was, and that his son should build a temple for God. After this, David conquered the Philistines, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, the Syrians of Damascus, the king of Zobah, and made them tributary, and set garrisons among them, and took their gold and silver, and dedicated it to God. And when they again renewed the war, he conquered the Ammonites and Syrians again: and he found out a lame son of Jonathan's, called Mephibosheth, and gave him all Saul's land, and made him sit at his own table. And yet, after all this, temptation drew him into an heinous sin, which blotted all his glory.

C. What was that?

M. While Joab, his general, was conquering the Ammonites, and besieging their city Rabbah, David, being at the top of prosperity, stayed idle at home; and one day, walking on the top of his house, he saw a beautiful woman washing herself, and he suffered lust to possess his heart; and he sent to know who she was, and lay with her, and she was with child by him, while her husband, Uriah, was at the siege in the war. And because adultery was a heinous sin, which God would have punished with shame and death, to hide his own crime, David sent for Uriah, as it were to know the news, and bid him go to his house, thinking that, by laying with his wife, the thing should be concealed; but Uriah lay among the king's servants, and said, while the king's captains lie on the ground and in tents, he would not go eat and drink, and lie with his wife. Then David made him drunk, hoping that then he would have gone home; but still he refused. Then David sent him with a letter to Joab in the army, bidding Joab set him in a place of danger, that he might be killed; which Joab did, and Uriah

was killed, and divers with him ; and David took his wife to be his wife. So that here he was guilty of lust, adultery, hypocrisy, drunkenness, and murder.

C. Sure he was a very bad man that would do all this ?

M. His sad example tells us what a good man may come to by temptation, if he be not watchful, and God do not save him from himself ; and it tells how dangerous it is to let in temptation at the first, and to have an ungoverned eye, and to look upon any tempting thing or person in an immodest manner : for when one spark of lust taketh fire on the heart, the flame soon grows great, and is hardly quenched ; and one sin draweth men on to another, and another to hide it, and escape the shame and punishment, when all do but increase the mischief which they would avoid.

C. But what did God do with David for this ?

M. He sent Nathan the prophet to him, to open the greatness of his sin, and to tell him that for this the sword should never depart from his house, and that God would raise up evil against him out of his own house, even one that should take his wives, and lie with them in the sight of all the people. And then David was struck with deep repentance, and confessed his sin, and begged God's mercy ; and God so far forgave him as not to damn, or kill, or depose him ; but he killed his child that was begotten in adultery ; and he followed him with affliction for it, which brought him low.

C. How did God afflict him ?

M. By his own children. First, his son Absalom had a beautiful sister, and Amnon, her brother, by another wife, fell into lust, called love, with her : and when he could not tempt her to lie with him, he forced her ; and when he had forced her he hated her : and in revenge for this, her brother Absalom killed his brother Amnon, and fled into another land three years. And when his father pardoned him at last, he flattered the people, and stole their hearts from David, and rebelled against him, and was proclaimed by them king in Hebron. So that David was fain to fly from Jerusalem into the wilderness, from his son Absalom. And Absalom got David's chief counsellor, Ahithophel, on his side, who advised him to follow David suddenly, and destroy him before he gathered strength. But David had a friend called Hushai, that took on him to be for Absalom, and gave him contrary counsel, to stay till all Israel could be gathered together, to make sure work of the battle.

And God overruled the rebels' hearts to follow this counsel of Hushai. And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he hanged himself. And when the day of battle came, David's men conquered Absalom's; and Absalom's mule carried him under a thick oak, where he was hanged by the head, and Joab killed him. But David loved him, and mourned for his death. This rebellion of Absalom showed God's justice in punishing David for his sin against Uriah; and it showed the inconstancy and untrustiness of the multitude, that so suddenly, for nothing, would forsake that king that had ruled them with extraordinary success, and sought his life whom they had valued above all men. Yea, after this battle was over, one Sheba rebelled, and the people followed him till he was killed.

C. And what befel them after this?

M. After this God sent a famine on the land three years together. And David inquired of God what was the cause; and God told him that it was because Saul would have destroyed the Gibeonites, to whom Joshua had made a covenant of peace, and so would break the oath of Joshua. And David asked the Gibeonites what satisfaction they would have; and they demanded the lives of seven of Saul's posterity, whom David gave them, and they hanged them up. And after this David had many battles with the Philistines, in which he overcame them.

Lastly. God being offended with Israel for sin, left David to the temptation of Satan, to take the number of all the people, in a carnal confidence in human strength: for which sin and the people, God's angel, by a plague, destroyed threescore and ten thousand.

C. Was not the Book of Psalms written by David?

M. Most of them were: by which it appeared that he was a prophet and a holy man, devoted to God and his service.

C. For what use was the book of Psalms written?

M. First, to exercise the writer's zeal towards God, by confession of sin, prayers for mercy, thanksgivings and praises unto God; and, next, to be an help for others in the same cases; but especially to be the public liturgy of the Jewish church, in their worship of God in the synagogues and temple.

The Fifteenth Lesson.—Of the Reign and Writings of Solomon.

C. Who was king next after David?

M. Adonijah, a son of David, sought it, which cost him his life; and Joab and Abiathar helped him; whereupon Joab was

killed for his former murders of Abner and Amasa, and Abiathar was put from the priesthood. For David, before he died, made Solomon, his younger son, king, by the advice of Nathan the prophet.

C. Did not the kingdom belong, by right, to the eldest?

M. No: for God kept the choice in his own hand, and it was in the people's under him; and he turned the hearts of the people to follow whom he chose. God preferred Solomon before his elder brethren, as he had done David before his elder brethren, and before the sons of Saul; and Moses, the younger, before Aaron, the elder brother; and Judah and Joseph before Reuben, and Jacob before Esau, and Isaac before Ishmael, and Shem before Ham, and Seth and Abel before Cain; and so of many others.

C. What did Solomon do?

M. When he prayed to God, God bade him ask what he should give him, and he asked wisdom. And it pleased God that he preferred that before riches, and honour, and long life; and God gave him greater wisdom than any king of Israel had before or after him; and he gave him with it all the rest. And he abounded in riches and honour, and he built a most rich and beautiful temple at Jerusalem, to be the chief place of God's public worship for all the land, where prayer was made, and sacrifices offered, and priests and Levites employed about them as their officers.

C. How could all the people out of all the countries come so far, and meet in one place?

M. It was a small country, so that they had not very far to travel, and they were to come but very seldom, at some great feasts, and they were not to be all at once in the temple. And their ordinary worship was performed in lesser assemblies at home.

C. What else did Solomon?

M. He governed wisely, and prospered greatly, being the only king that reigned over the twelve tribes in full prosperity and peace. But his prosperity proved a dangerous temptation to him, and he lived in all sorts of fleshly pleasure, and especially had multitudes of wives and concubines; and when he grew old, his wives drew him into the guilt of idolatry; for they were women of several other nations, and worshipped their several idols. And Solomon built, or allowed them, high

places for the worship of these idols, and so provoked God against him.

C. Did not you say, that he was the wisest of all the kings of Israel? And could a wise man do so bad?

M. He had more knowledge than any of them, as many great scholars now know more than better men; but it appeareth by their lives, that David, Hezekiah, and Josiah, had more than he of that practical wisdom which consisteth in holiness. And 2. Wise men may, by temptation, be drawn to folly; and as the wisest man is a fool when he is drunk, so he is when temptations prevail against his wisdom.

C. What books did Solomon write, to show his wisdom?

M. He wrote many: of which God hath preserved us three in the Bible. First, the Book of Proverbs, which containeth the praise of wisdom, and many excellent lessons, especially for young men. Secondly, the Song of Solomon. Thirdly, the book called Ecclesiastes, which seemeth to speak his repentance after his fall; in which he showeth, from his own experience, that all the profits, honours, and pleasures of this world are mere vanity and vexation, and all can give men no more than to eat and drink, and be merry; that so the flattering world may not deceive us when we should prepare for God's judgments and the life to come.

C. Did not God punish Solomon for so great a sin?

M. Yes, he cut off ten of the twelve tribes from the kingdom of his son; who foolishly followed the counsel of rash and bad young men, and had not learned his father's wisdom.

The Sixteenth Lesson.—Of the other Kings of Judah and Israel.

C. How did God cut off the ten tribes from Solomon's son?

M. His son Rehoboam was proud and foolish; and because Solomon, by his great buildings and pomp, had laid great burdens of service, and taxes, on the people, and they now desired to be eased of them; the old counsellors advised Rehoboam to speak kindly to them, and to ease them, and win their hearts. But the young counsellors advised him to speak roughly to them, and rule them by fear, and keep up his power. And he hearkened to these; whereupon the ten tribes all forsook him, and chose one Jeroboam king.

C. And how did Jeroboam reign?

M. He thought, that if the people went yearly up to Jerusalem to worship, they would be in the power of Rehoboam, and would turn to him again. Therefore he made new places for worship, and made two golden images, like calves, and set them to represent their God; and made priests for them of the basest of the people, who were not of the tribe of Levi. And thus he drew the ten tribes into a course of sin which was their ruin, and for which God at last forsook them.

But God sent a prophet, to prophesy to them, that the altar made for their idol should have their priests burnt on it, and men's bones, by Josiah by name. And when king Jeroboam heard him, he stretched out his hand, and said, "Lay hold on him;" and his hand was dried up, so that he could not pull it to him; and he entreated the prophet to pray for him, which he did, and his hand was restored; and the altar rent, to verify his word: and the king invited him home, and would have rewarded him; but he refused, because God had bid him not to eat or drink in that place. But an old lying prophet went after him, and told him, that God bid him call him back, to eat and drink with him; and he believed him, and did so. But because he disobeyed God, a lion killed him as he returned home. By which we see that all men must not be believed that take on them to be sent of God; and that they that preach to others may be destroyed, if they disobey God's word themselves.

C. Did the kingdom continue thus divided?

M. Yes, to the last. Israel had one king, and Judah another. And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days; and both of their people lived in wickedness and idol worship. And the king of Egypt came against Jerusalem, and took away all the rich vessels of gold, that Solomon made.

C. Who were the next kings after them?

M. Rehoboam's son, Abijam, a bad man, succeeded him. And Asa, his son, a better man, succeeded him. And Jehoshaphat, a good king, succeeded him. And Jehoram, a bad man, succeeded him. And Ahaziah, a bad man, was next him; and he being killed, his mother, Athaliah, killed all the royal line, save Joash, that was secretly saved, and she usurped the kingdom; and she was killed. And Joash, a good king, reigned next; and he was murdered. And Amaziah reigned next, and did well; yet he was murdered. And his son, Azariah,

reigned next (called also Uzziah); and God made him a leper, for invading the priest's office, by offering; and his son Jotham ruled, and, when he was dead, reigned next; and Ahaz, a bad man, succeeded him; and Hezekiah, a good king, came next him. Manasseh, a most wicked man, was next. Amon, a bad man, was next him; and he being murdered, his son Josiah, a good king, was next. Jehoahaz was next him; he was wicked, and the king of Egypt took him, and set his brother Eliakim, called Jehoiakim, in his stead: he was bad, and made subject to Nebuchadnezzar: and his son Jehoiakim was next. He was wicked; and Nebuchadnezzar carried him, and all the chief of the people, captives to Babylon; and over the rest, he made his uncle, Mattaniah, king, called Zedekiah. He was wicked, and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, who took him, and put out his eyes, and killed his sons, and destroyed Jerusalem; and carried him, and all the chief of the people left, to Babylon; and set one Gedaliah over the poor in the country, who was presently murdered. And thus ended the kingdom of Judah, by captivity.

C. And who succeeded Jeroboam, and what became of the kingdom of the ten tribes of Israel?

M. All that came after Jeroboam followed him, in his sin of idolatry, to keep the people from going to Jerusalem. Nadab came next Jeroboam. Baasha murdered him, and came next. Elah was next. Zimri murdered him, when he found him drunken, and reigned next; he killed also the king's kindred, and reigned but a week, before Omri was chosen king by the people; who besieged Zimri, and made him set fire to his house, and burn himself. Omri, a wicked man, was next. And Ahab, more wicked, next him. Ahaziah was next. His brother, Jehoram, was next. Jehu killed him, and was next. Jehoahaz was next. Joash was next. Another Jeroboam was next. Next him, was Zachariah. Shallum murdered him, and was next. Menahem killed him, and was next. Then Pekahiah. Pekah killed him, and was next. Hoshea killed him, and was next; and in his days Shalmanesar, king of Assyria, carried him, and all the chief people, away, and sent men of other countries into the land; who together feared God, and worshipped their own idols. And so ended the kingdom of Israel, before that of Judah.

C. But what great things fell out in all this time?

M. The greatest thing for our notice was, the many prophets that God sent to warn them, and what they did, and how they were used by these kings.

C. Who were these prophets?

M. 1. Ahijah was sent to prophesy Jeroboam's reign against Solomon, when he sinned. 2. Shemaiah was sent to forbid Judah to fight against Jeroboam, for Rehoboam. 3. A man of God was sent from Judah to foretel Jeroboam that Josiah should destroy his altar, and burn his priests on it. 4. When Jeroboam's son, Abijah was sick, Ahijah, the prophet, foretold his death, and the destruction of Jeroboam's wicked house. 5. Azariah is sent to Asa, to rid Judah of idols. 6. Hanani was sent to reprove Asa, for trusting to Syria for help; and, though otherwise he had done well, he was in a rage against the prophet, and imprisoned him, and oppressed some of the people; and in his sickness sought not to God, but to the physicians. 7. Jehoshaphat sent his princes and Levites, to teach the law of the Lord in the cities of Judah; and when he joined with Ahab in war, the prophet Jehu was sent to reprove him. 8. The same Jehu is sent to prophesy against king Baasha. 9. Elijah, in Ahab's days, prophesieth, that Israel should have no rain, but famine, three years. And when he fled to a brook-side, God sent ravens, to carry to him bread and flesh twice a-day. Then the brook was dried up; and God sent him to Zarephath, near Sidon, to a widow woman, to be fed. And the woman had nothing left but a little meal and oil, to make one cake for herself and son, before they died. And Elijah bid her make one for him first, and told her from God, that the meal and the oil should not waste and fail till rain came. And the woman believed him, and they all lived on that meal and oil a full year, and it wasted not, for God secretly renewed it. Then the woman's son died: and Elijah prayed to God, and laid himself upon the child, and God restored the soul and life of the child.

And the third year, God bid Elijah go show himself to Ahab; and wicked Ahab had a more wicked wife, Jezebel, who killed the prophets of the Lord. But yet he had a governor of his house, called Obadiah, who greatly feared God, and hid two hundred prophets, by fifties, in a cave, and fed them. To this Obadiah Elijah appeared, and bid him go tell Ahab of him; and promised to appear to him. And the king met Elijah, and said, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" And Elijah said,

“ I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, in that you have forsaken the Lord, and followed Baalim.” And to convince him, he bid him gather Israel and Baal's prophets to Mount Carmel. So he gathered eight hundred and fifty false prophets, that Jezebel maintained. And Elijah said to all the people, “ How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal be God, follow him.” And he said, “ I only remain a prophet of the Lord, and Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty;” the other four hundred belonged to the groves. So he bid them take a bullock, and cut him in pieces for a sacrifice, and lay it on wood without fire, and he would do the same by another bullock; and let each call on his God, and let him that answereth by fire be their God. And they did so; and Baal's prophets cried, “ O Baal, hear us!” and Elijah mocked them, and said, their god was talking, or pursuing, or in a journey, or asleep, and must be awaked. And they cried, and cut themselves till they bled, as their manner was, but no fire came. Then Elijah repaired God's altar, and laid on the wood and sacrifice, and made a trench about the altar, and he made them pour water on the sacrifice and wood three times, till the trench was full; and he prayed to God, and a fire came and consumed the flesh and the wood, and the stones, and the water. And when the people saw it, they fell on their faces and cried, “ The Lord he is God! the Lord he is God!” And Elijah bade the people kill all the prophets of Baal; and they obeyed him, and killed them. Then Elijah bade king Ahab haste up, for rain was coming, and it rained plentifully.

C. But how did the king take the death of his prophets?

M. He told his wife Jezebel, and she swore that she would take away the life of Elijah the next day: and Elijah fled into Judah, and went into the wilderness, and prayed God to end his life; and he fell asleep, and an angel awoke him, and bid him arise and eat. And he saw by him a cake baked on coals, and a cruse of water, and he did eat and drink, and slept again: and the angel came again, and bid him eat and drink, for he had far to go. And he went to Horeb, the mount of God, forty days, in the strength of that meat: as he was there in a cave, God spake to him and said, “ What dost thou here, Elijah?” and he said, “ I have been very jealous for the Lord, because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain the prophets, and I only am left, and they seek

my life also." And after a wind, that tore the rocks, and an earthquake, and a fire, had passed by him, God spake in a still voice, and bid him go and anoint Hazael, king over Syria, and Jehu king over Israel, and Elisha to be a prophet in his stead; and God told him, he had yet seven thousand in Israel that had not bowed to Baal. So Elijah went, and did but cast his mantle on Elisha, and he left, and followed, and served him.

C. But what became of king Ahab, and Jezebel?

M. Shortly after, Benhadad, king of Syria, raised an army against him, and commanded him to surrender to him all that he had: Ahab was ready to yield, but the elders of Israel were against it; and though Ahab was wicked, God, in mercy, sent a prophet to him, to bid him not fear that great multitude, for God would deliver them into his hand; and he told him how to order the battle: and so the Syrians were overthrown. And the prophet told Ahab, that at the return of the year they would come again, and bid him prepare. And so it came to pass, for the Syrians told their king, that the gods of Israel were gods of the hills, but, if he would fight in the plains, he should be too hard for them. But God would not put up that reproach, but sent a prophet to bid Ahab fight with them again, and he should conquer; which he did, and then the Syrians fled into a city, and a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of them that were left. And Benhadad and his servants came in sackcloth, with ropes on their heads, to beg for life of Ahab; and he let him go: whereupon God sent another prophet to tell Ahab, that because he had dismissed one whom God had appointed to destruction, his life should go for his life.

After this Naboth, a subject of Ahab, had a vineyard, which lay near to Ahab's house, and Ahab desired it, to make him a garden, and offered him money, or a better, for it. But Naboth refused, because it had been the inheritance of his fathers. This so offended Ahab that he took to his bed, (and would not eat) in discontent. But his wife Jezebel told him that this was unmeet for a king, and bid him be merry, and she would give him Naboth's vineyard. So she wrote letters to the nobles and elders of the city where Naboth dwelt, in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, requiring them to proclaim a fast, and set up Naboth, and get two wicked men to swear that he blasphemed God and the king, and so to stone him to death as guilty. And they did all that was required of them.

C. Could not the king have taken it without this ?

M. No ; God had given the people their inheritances, and they knew that the king might not take them from any that did not forfeit them : and they that were so wicked as to obey the king in perjury and murder, yet would not give him an arbitrary power over their inheritances and lives. But God sent Elijah to Ahab, when he went to take possession of the vineyard : and he said, " Hast thou killed, and taken possession ? " and Ahab said, " Hast thou found me, O my enemy ? " And Elijah said, " I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil : " and, he told him, that in the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, they should lick his blood, and all his house should be destroyed ; and that the dogs should eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel, and dogs and birds should eat his household. And when Ahab heard this, he humbled himself in sackcloth, with fasting : and God so far suspended his judgments as to tell Elijah that, because he humbled himself, this destruction of his house should not come till he was dead.

C. And how did God execute this judgment ?

M. After three years, Ahab had a mind to recover Ramoth, a bordering city, from the Syrians ; and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, coming to visit him, he persuaded him to join with him in the war, which he did : and Jehoshaphat desired him first to inquire of the Lord, what they should do ; and king Ahab gathered four hundred of his own prophets, and inquired of them, and they bid him go, for God would deliver the city into his hand. But Jehoshaphat asked whether there were never a prophet of the Lord to inquire of and Ahab said, " There is one Micaiah, but I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good of me, but evil. " Jehoshaphat said, " Let not the king say so : " so the two kings sat in their robes, and all the prophets prophesied good to them ; and said, " Go and prosper : " and one of them, Zedekiah, made iron horns, and said, " With these shalt thou push the Syrians till thou hast consumed them. " And they that went to call Micaiah, told him what all the prophets said, and persuaded him to be conformable, and say as the rest did : but he protested that he would speak the word of God, whatever it should be. And when the king demanded it of him, he said, " I saw all Israel scattered on the hills, as sheep without a shepherd ; " and the Lord said, " These have no master, let them return in peace. " And Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, " Did not I tell thee that he would prophesy no good of me, but evil ? " And Micaiah told him, that he saw the Lord on his throne, and the host of heaven about

him, and that he gave leave to an evil spirit to be a lying spirit in the mouth of all Ahab's prophets, to persuade him to go and fall at Ramoth. And Zedekiah struck Micaiah, and said "Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak to thee?" And Micaiah told him, that he should see in that day when he should go into an inner chamber to hide himself. And king Ahab said, "Put this fellow in prison, and feed him with the bread and water of affliction, till I return in peace:" and Micaiah said, "If thou return in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me;" and bid the people all to hear this. So Ahab and Jehoshaphat went out to war, and Ahab was mortally wounded with an arrow, and was carried to Samaria, and died there, and the dogs licked his blood, but Jehoshaphat escaped. But Jehu the prophet was sent thus to reprove him, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord."

10. After this, divers nations joined in war against Jehoshaphat, and he prayed earnestly to God, and God raised a prophet, Jehaziel, to bid them not fear, for God would deliver them without fighting; and they believed the prophet, and went towards their enemies with songs of praise to God; and God made their enemies fight with one another, so that the Jews found them dead on the ground, and were three days gathering all the spoil: and they returned home with psalms of praise, and Jehoshaphat set just judges and teachers through all the land.

11. Yet did this good king after all this, join himself with Ahaziah, king of Israel, who succeeded Ahab, in sending out a fleet of ships to sea: and God sent Eliezer, a prophet, to tell him that for this God would break his ships; and so it came to pass.

12. Ahaziah, king of Israel, fell from an upper chamber; and was sick; and he sent to inquire of idols whether he should recover; and Elijah met his messengers, and bid them tell him that for this he should die, and not come down from his bed. And the king sent a captain, with fifty soldiers, to fetch Elijah, and at the word of Elijah, God sent down fire from heaven, which consumed the captain and all his soldiers. Then the king sent another captain with fifty more, and fire from heaven consumed them also. And the king sent yet another captain with fifty more; and this captain fell on his knees, and entreated Elijah to spare his life. And the angel of God spake to Elijah, and

bid him go to the king and fear not. And he went and told him, that for inquiring of Baal, and not of God, he should die : and so he did ; and Jehoram reigned in his stead.

13. After this came the time that Elijah must depart from earth, and he prayed Elisha to tarry where he was, for God had sent him to Bethel. But he would not, but went with him : and the sons of the prophets told Elisha that God would take away his master that day, and he said, “-I know it ; hold your peace.” And Elijah said to Elisha, “Tarry here, I pray thee, for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho ;” but he would not leave him. And the prophets of Jericho told him, that the Lord would take away his master that day, and he said, “ I know it, hold ye your peace.” And Elijah said, “Tarry here, I pray thee, for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan ;” but he would not leave him. And fifty prophets followed them at a distance, to see the issue : and Elijah, with his mantle, smote the waters of Jordan, and they divided, and they two went over dry. And Elijah said to Elisha, “ Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee :” and he asked that a double portion of his Spirit might be upon him. Elijah said, “ Thou hast asked a hard thing ; but if thou see me when I am taken from them, it shall be so to thee, else not.” And there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them ; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven, and Elisha saw, and cried out, “ My Father, my Father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.” And he saw them no more ; and he rent his own clothes, and took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and with it he struck the waters of Jordan, and said, “ Where is the Lord God of Elijah ?” and the waters parted, and he returned over dry. And when the sons of the prophets saw it, they said, “ The Spirit of Elijah resteth on Elisha ;” and they bowed to him. And they entreated that fifty men might go to see whether God had not cast Elijah on some mountain : and Elisha forbade them, but after yielded to their importunity. And they went and searched, but found him not. And so Elisha became like him.

14. The first miracle that Elisha did after the dividing of the waters of Jordan was this : the city Jericho was pleasantly situate, but the waters were naught, and the land barren. And he cast salt into the water, and said, “ Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters ;” and they were forthwith healed.

15. And as he went from thence, little children mocked him, and said, “ Go up, thou bald-head.” And God moved him to curse

them, and there came two bears out of the wood, and tore forty-and-two children.

C. Was not that too cruel a revenge?

M. It was God that did it, who can do no wrong, and knoweth what he doth. And it is like he did it rather to be a warning to children afterward, to take heed of mocking any, but especially holy men.

16. After king Ahaziah, Jehoram reigned, and in his days Moab rebelled against Israel, and the king of Israel got Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and the king of Edom, to help him in war: but when they passed seven days through the wilderness, the three kings and their armies, and horses, were like to perish, because they found no water. But Jehoshaphat asked for a prophet of the Lord to enquire of, and king Jehoram called Elisha: and Elisha said to him, "What have I to do with thee, get thee to the prophets of thy father and mother. Surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee: then Elisha said, make this valley full of ditches: for thus saith the Lord, you shall not see wind or rain, yet the valley shall be filled with water: and also God will deliver the Moabite into your hand."

And so it came to pass: water came from towards Edom, and filled the country; and they overthrew the Moabites, and destroyed much of their country. And the king of Moab sacrificed his son and heir to his idol god, on the wall before them, and so they left him.

17. After this a prophet's widow was in debt, and the creditors came to take her two sons as bondmen for the debt; and she sought to Elisha: and he asked her what she had in the house; and she said "Nothing, save a pot of oil:" and he bid her go borrow empty vessels enough, and pour out the oil into them: and she did so, and the oil ran as long as she had ever a vessel to receive it: and he bid her go sell the oil and pay the creditors, and live on the rest.

18. Then Elisha went to Shunem, where was a great woman, who constrained him to come in, and eat with her, which he did as oft as he passed by: and she said to her husband, "I perceive that this is a holy man of God that oft passeth by us: let us make for him a little chamber on the wall, and set a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick, that he may turn in hither:" and they did so. And he called the woman, and asked her what he should do for her: but she said that she lived

among her own people, and wanted nothing : but Gehazi, his servant, told him she had no child, and her husband was old : and the prophet told her that “ at that season she should bear a son ; ” and she did so. And when the child was grown up, as he went to his father to the reapers, he was taken with the head-ach, and shortly died ; and she laid him on Elisha’s bed, and rode speedily to Elisha, and constrained him to go home with her ; but he sent his man Gehazi before with a staff, and bid him lay it on the face of the child, but he revived not : and when Elisha came he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, and his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands, and the flesh of the child waxed warm : and he walked awhile, and then did so again, and the child revived, and he gave him to the mother.

19. After this in a dearth, many sons of the prophets came to him, and he bid his servant make pottage for them : and he ignorantly gathered wild gourds (a horrid, bitter, violent plant), and they cried out, “ There is death in the pot : ” and he bid them cast in meal, and the pottage after had no harm in it.

20. After this, he multiplied a little food, to satisfy many people.

21. The king of Syria had a great man, captain of his army, called Naaman, but he had the leprosy : and a little maid of Israel, whom they had taken among the captives, waited on his wife : and she said, “ Would my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria ; for he would recover him of his leprosy : ” and Naaman was told what she said, and the king of Syria bid him go to Samaria, and he would write a letter from him to the king of Israel : which was that he would cure Naaman of his leprosy. But the king of Israel thought he did it to pick a quarrel with him : when Elisha heard of it, he sent to the king, saying, “ Let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. ” Now Naaman brought with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment : and he came to the door of Elisha, and Elisha sent a messenger to him, and said, “ Go wash seven times in Jordan, and thy flesh shall come again, and thou shalt be clean. ” But Naaman went away in rage, and said, “ I thought he would have come out to me, and called on his God, and moved his hand over the place, and recover it : are not the waters of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel ? ” but his servants humbly appeased him, saying, “ If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing,

wouldest thou not have done it? How much rather when he saith to thee, wash and be clean." So he went and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, and was healed. Then he returned to the prophet and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth but the God of Israel." And he urged him to take a gift of his money; but the prophet utterly refused it. And Naaman desired to have two mules' load of the earth of Israel, that on it he might sacrifice to God when he came home. But when he was gone, the Prophet's servant, Gehazi, coveted his money, and thought it was his master's weakness to refuse it from so great a man; and he ran after him with a lie, and told him that even now two young men, sons of the prophets, were come to his master, and he desired him to give them a talent of silver, and two changes of raiment: and Naaman made him take two talents. And when he came in to his master, he asked him where he had been; and he lied again, and said he went no whither. But Elisha said, "Went not my heart with thee when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is this a time to receive money, &c. The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave to thee, and to thy seed for ever: and he went out from his presence a leper."

22. After this the young prophets desired him that they might go to Jordan, and make there a larger house for them and him to dwell together in; and he went with them; and as they cut down wood by the river side, one man's axe-head fell into the water; and he said, "Alas, master! it was borrowed;" and Elisha made the iron to rise and swim, and they took it up.

23. After this, the king of Syria oft attempted a war against the king of Israel: and Elisha still told him which way the king of Syria would come, so that he still avoided him. Then the king of Syria thought that some of his servants betrayed him; but they said, "It is the prophet that tells the king of Israel what thou sayest in thy bedchamber." And the king of Syria sent spies to know where to find and take Elisha: and finding him in Dothan, they beset the city in the night with an army, and in the morning his servants rose and saw them, and cried out, "Alas, master! what shall we do?" And Elisha said, "Fear not, fear not: for they that be with us, are more than they that be against us:" and he prayed God to open his men's eyes, and he saw mountains full of horses and chariots of fire about Elisha: and Elisha prayed God to strike the Syrian army with blindness, and it was done. And Elisha went to them, and told them they

were out of the way, and bid them follow him, and he would bring them to the place where the prophet was. And he led them into the midst of Samaria, the king's chief city; and then prayed God to open their eyes, and they found themselves in Samaria: and the king of Israel would have killed them; but the prophet made him set them meat, and send them home.

24. After this, the king of Syria besieged Samaria so long, till the famine was so extreme, that a woman cried to the king for justice, because another woman and she agreed to kill, and boil, and eat, their sons by turn; and when they had eaten hers, the other woman hid her son. This put the king of Israel past patience, and he vowed to kill Elisha, because God did not deliver them. And Elisha was sitting in his house with the elders, and he said to them, "This son of a murderer hath sent to take away my head: but shut the door when the messenger cometh:" and the king said, "This evil is of the Lord; why should I wait any longer?" And Elisha said, "Thus saith the Lord, to-morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel." And one of the king's lords said, "If the Lord would make windows in heaven how could this be?" And Elisha said, "Thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shall not eat of it." And there were four lepers at the gate of Samaria, and they agreed to cast themselves on the mercy of the Syrians, having no other hope of life. And when they came where the camp was, there was no one there, for God had made them hear as the noise of many armies, and they thought the Israelites had hired the Egyptians against them, and they all fled in fear, and left their provisions behind them. And when the four lepers had eaten and drunk their fill, they brought the news into the city (having taken and hid as much silver and gold as they would :) and when the king heard it, he thought the Syrians had retired in craft to entice them out and take them: and he sent a few horsemen to see; who found all the way to Jordan where they fled, spread with garments cast away; so the city went out, and had all their treasure and provisions; and all was as cheap as the prophet had foretold. And the king set that lord that spake against the prophet's words, in the gate of the city, and there the crowding trod him to death.

25. After this, the woman of Shunem, whose son Elisha restored to life, was told by him the famine would continue seven years, and he bid her go sojourn elsewhere; and she went

among the Philistines till the seven years were expired ; and her house and land, in the mean time, were possessed by others, and she went to petition the king that they might be restored : and just when she came, Gehazi was telling the king how Elisha restored her son to life, and he said, " This is the woman, and this is her son : " and the king caused all to be restored to her.

26. After this, Elisha went to Damascus, in Syria ; and king Benhadad heard of it, and he lay sick, and he sent Hazael to the prophet to know whether he should recover. And the prophet said, he may recover (as to his disease) but he shall surely die : And he looked on Hazael, and wept : and he asked him why he wept ? " And he said, I know the evil thou wilt do to Israel : thou wilt kill men and children, and rip up the women : and Hazael said, Am I a dog, that I should do this ? And Elisha said, God hath showed me that thou shalt be king of Syria ; " and when he heard this, he went home, and killed the king (stifling him by spreading a wet cloth on his face). And he reigned in his stead.

27. After this, Jehoram, king of Israel, was wounded in a war at Ramoth, against Hazael, and he went to Jezreel to be healed ; and Elisha called a young prophet, and said, " Go to Ramoth, to Jehu, (one of the king's captains) and call him into an inner chamber, and pour this box of oil on his head, and say, Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel ; and when thou hast done, flee away : " and he did so, and told him he must cut off all the house of Ahab for their sin. And the rest of the captains made Jehu tell them what he said, and when they heard it, all their hearts were turned to fulfil the prophecy ; and they set up Jehu, and marched with him against his master Jehoram, and he met him at Naboth's vineyard and killed him, and cast his carcass there, as God had foretold : and he killed Ahaziah, king of Judah, that had come to visit Jehoram ; and he went to Jezreel, and made them throw down Jezebel, through a window, where she died, and the dogs eat her flesh, all save her palms of her hands, and her feet, and skull ; and caused all Ahab's sons to be killed, even seventy persons, and all his kindred and priests, and great men ; and he killed forty-two of the brethren of Ahaziah, king of Judah, that were going to visit king Jehoram's sons ; and he took on that yet he would worship Baal, and made all Baal's prophets come to sacrifice ; and he killed them all, and made Baal's house a draught house,

and burnt all their images with the fire. But he yet continued in Jeroboam's sin of false worship.

28. Before this, Jehoram, king of Judah, was wicked, and worshipped Baal, and killed his brethren; and Elisha sent a letter to him to tell him that God would cut off his dominions by Hazael, and would strike him with a sickness, so that his bowels should fall out; and so all this came to pass.

29. And in Judah, when king Ahaziah was killed, and his wicked mother, Athaliah, killed his brethren, that she might reign, his sister, that was wife to Jehoiada, the priest, had a young son, Joash, six years old; and in the seventh year Jehoiada, the priest, got many on his side, and killed Athaliah, and made Joash king at seven years old: but the high priest ruled in his name, and put down the idols, and set up the worship of God: and Joash did well all the days of Jehoiada: but when he was dead, the princes about him drew him from God to idolatry. And God sent Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, to say to them. "Why transgress ye the command of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper? because you have forsaken the Lord, he also hath forsaken you." But they stoned this prophet to death by this unthankful king's commandment, even in the court of the house of the Lord; and when he died, he said, "The Lord look upon it, and require it." And so he did: for at the end of the year the Syrians came with a small army, and destroyed all the princes from among the people, and sent away the spoil: and the king was diseased, and his servants killed him, who had turned from God, and murdered the son of him that saved his life, and made him king; God avenging his cruel ingratitude.

30. And when his son, king Amaziah, preparing for a war with Edom, trusting to numbers, hired an hundred thousand Israelites for an hundred talents, to help him, and God sent a prophet to bid him send home the Israelites, for God was not with them: but the king was loth to lose his hundred talents: but the prophet prevailed, and he sent them home: and he went with his own men, and conquered and destroyed the Edomites: yet was he so sottish as to carry home the idol gods of Edom, and worship them as his gods: and God sent a prophet to ask him why he would seek to the gods that could not save their own people? But the king proudly answered him, "Art thou made of the king's counsel? forbear, why shouldst

thou be smitten?" and the prophet forbore, but told him that he knew God had determined to destroy him, because of this his sin and disobedience. And so it fell out; for he provoked the king of Israel to fight with him (for the soldiers which he hired and dismissed had, in anger, plundered his country). And he was conquered, and Jerusalem pillaged, and the walls broken down; and after this his own servants murdered him.

31. In Israel, the Syrians grievously oppressed them; and when Elisha lay dying, Josiah the king came to visit him, and lament over him. And he bid the king open the window and shoot an arrow, and strike the ground, and he struck thrice. And the prophet was angry, and told him now he should conquer the Syrians but thrice; but if he had struck six or seven times he should have consumed them. And when Elisha was dead and buried, the Moabites invaded the land, and being burying a dead man in haste, they put him into Elisha's sepulchre, and when the dead body touched his bones he revived, and stood up.

32. When Uzziah (called Azariah) was king in Judah, and did well and prospered, at last his heart was puffed up, and he would needs burn incense to the Lord: and when the priests told him it belonged not to him, but was their office, he was wroth them; and suddenly God struck him with a leprosy, and they thrust him out, and he hastened out himself, and was shut up as a leper to the day of his death.

33. Before Israel was carried away captive by the Assyrians, in the reign of Hoshea, all the prophets called them from their sin, and foretold God's judgments, but they would not hear them.

34. In the reign of good king Hezekiah, the king of Assyria sent an army against Jerusalem, where Rabshakeh blasphemed God, and bid the people not to trust in him, for no God could save his people from the Assyrian power. And God sent Isaiah the prophet to tell Hezekiah, that as he prayed to God, and trusted in him, God would deliver him, and put his hook in the nostrils of the Assyrian king. And that night the angel of the Lord killed an hundred and fourscore and five thousand of the Assyrian army, and in the morning they were all found dead. And shortly after, when their king, Sennacherib, at Nineveh, was worshipping in the house of his idol god, his own sons killed him.

35. After this, Hezekiah was dangerously sick, and he earnestly prayed to God to spare him, and God sent Isaiah, the

prophet, to tell him of a medicine to cure him, and to promise him fifteen years' longer time to live. And when Hezekiah desired a sign to confirm his belief, God made the dial's shadow go backward ten degrees to satisfy him. But after this God was not pleased that Hezekiah showed the king of Babylon's ambassadors all his treasure; and he sent Isaiah to tell him that all that, with his posterity, should be carried to Babylon.

36. When his son, Manasseh, proved a wicked bloody idolater, worse than the heathens, God sent his prophets to tell them that he would cast them off as he had done the Israelites. Yet this wicked king, when he lay a prisoner in the fetters of the Assyrians, humbled himself to God, and repented, and God heard his prayers, and delivered him.

37. When his son Ammon, a bad man, was killed, his son Josiah, reigned, and restored the true religion. And Hilkiyah, the priest, sent him the book of Moses' law, where, reading God's threatenings, he humbled himself, and made all the land reform and pray. And God sent him word by Huldah, a prophetess, that for the great sins that had been done, God would give up the Jews into captivity, but because he had humbled himself, it should not be done in his days. Yet after this, even this good Josiah would needs rashly go out to war against the king of Egypt, against God's warning of him, and was killed, on which occasion, Jeremiah wrote his lamentation.

38. In the reign of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, the prophet Isaiah reprov'd the sins of the Jews, and prophesied of their punishments, and of Christ and his kingdom.

39. In the reign of Josiah, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah, did Jeremiah prophesy, against their sin, and of their punishment, and captivity, and was cruelly used for it, till the Babylonians delivered him.

40. In the captivity, Ezekiel prophesied: and Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, some before, and some in the captivity.

The Seventeenth Lesson.—The History of the Captivated Jews.

C. What became of the Jews after that they were carried captives to Babylon?

M. The most that we are concerned to know of them is contained in the books of Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, and in

the Apocryphal Book of the Maccabees, and other common history.

C. What saith the Book of Daniel of them?

M. I. When Nebuchadnezzar carried them to Babylon, he gave order to Ashpenaz to choose some of the most comely and ingenious children of the Jews, and teach them the Chaldean tongue, and nourish and breed them, to be fit to stand before the king. So he chose Daniel, and Hananiah, and Mishael, and Azariah; but the Jews being forbidden by God to eat some such meat as the king sent them, they refused them, and the king's wine, and craved leave to feed on pulse and water; and by this they became fairer and fatter than all the rest. And God gave to Daniel an extraordinary spirit to prophesy, and interpret dreams: and the king having an extraordinary dream, required all his soothsayers and wise men to tell him both what the dream was and what its interpretation was, or else he would destroy them. And when none of them could do it, Daniel undertaketh it, and telleth the king both; and for this the king advanced him to be chief in government over his sages, and the other three were made rulers also at his request.

But the king, being an idolater, made a golden image, and commanded all to worship it. But these three religious Jews refused, though he threatened to burn them in a furnace. They told him that the God whom they served was able to deliver them out of his hand; but if he would not, yet be it known to him, they would not worship his image. Upon this, he caused a furnace to be made extraordinary hot, and them to be cast into it. And the flame catched and burnt up those that cast them in. But God kept the flame from hurting them; and the king saw them walk unburnt in the flaming furnace, and one with them that was glorious, like an angel, called the Son of God. And he being astonished, called them out, and made a decree, that all his subjects should honour the true God, that had saved them; and whoever would speak against him should be cut in pieces, and their houses made dunghills. After this, Nebuchadnezzar had an extraordinary dream, which did portend his own fall, and that he should be cast out of his kingdom, among brutes. And Daniel expounded it to him, when no other could. And accordingly it came to pass; for a year after, as he was proudly boasting of Babylon, and the glory of his kingdom, a

voice from heaven told him, that the kingdom was departed from him; and his understanding was taken from him, and they drove him among the beasts. But his reason returned to him, and he was restored, and praised God.

After this, Belshazzar, another king, made a great feast for his lords; and as they were drinking riotously, in the holy vessels that were taken from God's temple, at Jerusalem, a hand appeared, writing upon the wall, signifying that his kingdom should be taken from him, and given to the Medes and Persians. And none but Daniel could expound the words; and that very night Belshazzar was killed, and Darius took the kingdom.

After this, Darius set an hundred and twenty princes over his kingdom, and, over these, three presidents, of whom Daniel was chief. And these princes envied Daniel, and sought to find some accusation against him, to destroy him; but he was so blameless, that they could find none. Therefore they resolved to fetch somewhat against him for his religion, concerning the law of God. And they saw that he was much in prayer; and they got the king, by importunity, to pass a decree, that no man should put up any petition to God, or man, save only to the king, for thirty days, on pain of being cast to the lions, in their den. When Daniel knew that the decree was signed, he opened his window, and thrice a day prayed in his house, as he was wont. Then these lords accused him to the king, for breaking the law; and the king was sorry, and would have saved him, but upon their importunity he yielded, and Daniel was cast into the lions' den; but they hurt him not. The king passed the night in trouble, and early in the morning went to the den, and cried, "O Daniel, is thy God, whom thou servest, able to deliver thee from the lions?" And Daniel said, "My God hath sent his angel, and shut the mouths of the lions, that they have not hurt me, because before him I was innocent, and before thee have done no hurt." Then the king was glad, and caused Daniel to be taken up, and those to be cast in that accused him, with their wives and children; and the lions broke their bones in pieces, ere they came to the ground. And the king made a decree, that all should fear and honour the God of Daniel.

This Daniel was a holy man, and spent much of his time in fasting and prayer; and God sent an angel to him, that told

him of the great changes of the kingdoms of the world that were to come, and told him the very time when Christ was to come, and to be put to death.

C. What saith the book of Ezra of the Jews?

M. It tells us how king Cyrus, before named by Jeremiah, was stirred up by God, to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem; and how he restored the captive Jews to their own land; and how Zerubbabel and Joshua set upon the work; and how malicious enemies hindered them; and how Darius prosecuted the work, though the enemies accused the builders, as contriving a rebellion: and how the building was finished; and how king Artaxerxes after sent Ezra, with the rest of the captives, who, by fasting, and prayer, and confession of sin, and teaching the people the law of God, restored religion, which was almost lost in the captivity.

C. What doth the book of Nehemiah tell us?

M. It tells us how king Artaxerxes sent Nehemiah to build up the wall of the city of Jerusalem; and how he and the people unweariedly carried on the work; and how malignant enemies accused and hindered them; and how he, with Ezra and the chief of the people, by fasting, and prayer, and repentance, engaged all in a covenant with God to keep his law; and how they informed the people, and instructed them, and restored religion.

C. What doth the book of Esther tell us?

M. It tells us how King Ahasuerus, putting away his Queen, chose Esther, a Jew, in her stead; and how Mordecai, her kinsman, that bred her up, was preferred hereupon; and how proud Haman, who was greatest with the king, hated him, because he bowed not to him; and how Haman, that he might destroy Mordecai, made the king believe, that the Jews were a rebellious people, against the king's profit, and got a commission to destroy them all: but Esther petitioned the king, and obtained their deliverance. And Mordecai, having discovered a conspiracy against the king, the king resolved to advance him more, and asked Haman how that man should be used, whom the king did delight to honour? And, Haman, thinking it could be none but himself, said, "Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal that is set upon his head, and let them be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man with them, and bring him on horseback, through the streets of the city, and proclaim

before him, Thus shall it be done with the man whom the king delighteth to honour:" and the king commanded Haman himself to do all this to Mordecai, whom he hated, which broke his heart, but he dared not disobey. After this, queen Esther told the king, how Haman had got his commission to destroy all the Jews, and the king's wrath was kindled against him, and he caused him to be hanged on a very high gallows, which Haman had made to hang Mordecai on. And also the queen procured a commission from the king, giving power to the Jews to kill all their malicious enemies that would have destroyed them; which they executed.

C. What is it that the history of the Maccabees tell us?

M. It tells us the state of the Jews that returned and dwelt in Judea, and how they were governed by the high priest, and what wars they had with many great princes: but because this book is no part of the Bible, I will say no more of it: though you may profitably read it, to know the state of the Jews, till the birth of Jesus Christ.

C. But why must I know all these stories? What are they to me any more than any other history?

M. I shall tell you that the next time: all this is to prepare you to know one that is God and man, Jesus Christ; and what he hath done, and will do for the salvation of man.

The Eighteenth Lesson.—The History of Christ's Incarnation, Life, and Death.

M. You must know that all the Jewish and Old Testament history is but preparatory to the history of the gospel of Jesus Christ; as all the types and ceremonies were but preparatory to his revelation, mediation, and kingdom. The Jews were themselves a small and sinful people; but their state of peculiarity, as under a more special government of God, made them a fit type, and preparatory to the catholic church of Christ. The law of Moses was just, but rigorous; and burdensome in multitudes of ceremonies: but its purity and divinity made it fit, as a schoolmaster, to lead them to Christ, who is the end of their policy and law.

C. Who is Jesus Christ?

M. He is the Eternal Word, Wisdom, and Son of God, who took the nature of man, and so is God and man in one person, that he might be a Mediator between God and man, to reconcile and recover fallen, miserable man to God, and save his

church from sin, and death, and hell, and bring them to glory in the heavenly kingdom.

C. Is there more Gods than one ?

M. No: but in God there are three persons, called the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

C. How can three persons be one God ?

M. As well as one sun can have light, and heat, and motion. For a person in the Godhead is not like the persons of men, which are so many substances divided from one another; but this is the greatest mystery, which you must learn better hereafter, when you are riper, and more capable.

C. And how can God be made a man ?

M. As well as our souls can dwell and act in our bodies; (though there be difference;) not by any change of God, but by uniting himself to the human nature of Jesus.

How doth the fire become a candle? The fire or flame is not the wick or tallow; but yet it is so united to them, that it is with them one and the same candle.

C. Hath God a Son ?

M. Yes: but not begotten, as we men are, by our parents.

C. How then ?

M. No similitude can show us clearly these great, unsearchable mysteries; but some may a little help us to understand somewhat of them. Do you know how the sun begetteth, or causeth, the beams of light? or do you know how a man begetteth, or causeth his own thoughts? This showeth us a little how God the Father begets his Son, which is called his Word and Wisdom, from all eternity: and then when this Son, or Word, became a man, that was another begetting.

C. Was Christ begotten of his Father ?

M. Yes: the first was before all time and worlds, from eternity. This is Christ's Godhead, by which he and his Father are as truly one God as the sun and its light are one sun, or as a man's soul and his understanding are one soul.

C. And what was the other begetting of Christ ?

M. God by his Spirit did beget Jesus Christ, without any other father, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, in which the Eternal Word, or Son of God, did take to himself the substance and nature of man, and so was made and born a man.

C. Did he take only the flesh and body of a man, or the soul of a man also ?

M. He took both body and soul of man; and his God-

head was as nearly united to his soul (and more than a soul to that soul) as our souls are to our bodies. And so as we have a soul and body, Christ had a Godhead, and a soul, and a body.

C. Was he born as other men are ?

M. Yes : but not begotten nor conceived as others.

C. Where was he born, and how ?

M. He was born at Bethlehem, a little city in Judea, in a common inn, and that in a stable.

C. How came that to pass ?

M. His mother, after she was with child of him by the Holy Ghost, was married to a man called Joseph, who was taken for his father, and was but a carpenter ; but both he and Mary his mother, were of the blood royal, descended from King David : and at that time the Romans had conquered a great part of the world, and also conquered Judea, and were rulers there ; and their emperor Augustus made a decree, that the names of all his subjects must be taken, and enrolled in the places where they were born ; and so Joseph, who was gone to live in Galilee, far off, was put to travel with his wife to Bethlehem, to be enrolled ; and there was no room in the inn, and so Mary was delivered of her son Jesus in the stable.

C. But if Jesus was God, why should he be born of so poor a woman, and in so poor a manner ?

M. Oh ! This was part of the reason of his coming into the world : he came to suffer for our sins, and not to live as earthly kings, in pomp and pleasure ; and therefore he began his life in a low and suffering state, and so he passed it on to the end. And also he came to teach us all how to suffer, and to live above the love and vanity of this world, that we may obtain a better world after we are dead, and not to make us great men on earth, or to pamper and pleasure our flesh.

C. But how was it known that God begat Jesus ?

M. God did many ways reveal it. He sent an angel to Zachary, a priest, to tell him that his wife should bear a son, which was John the Baptist, who should be a prophet, to prepare men to believe in Christ ; and Zachary hardly believing it, the angel told him, that he should be dumb till the child was born, and so he was ; and when John was born Zachary's tongue was loosed, and he prophesied of Christ. Also God sent his angel to Mary, to tell her, that she should be with child by the Holy Ghost ; and she believed and prophesied, praising God. Also, at the time of Christ's birth, angels appeared to some

shepherds, that were watching their flocks in the field by night, and told them that Christ was then born at Bethlehem, and they might find him laid in a stable. And the angels sung this praise to God, saying, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, and to men good will." And the shepherds came and found him there.

Also there were three wise astronomers of another country, in the East, that by a new star were taught, by God, to know it; and the star went before them, and led them to the very place where they found him, and offered gifts, as to a new-born king. It is likely an angel was the conductor of that star.

C. How was Christ received when he was born?

M. King Herod, being told by these wise men that he was born king, intended to murder him, and bid the wise men find him out, and then come and tell him that he might worship him; but God bid them go home another way. And when Herod saw that he was deceived, he sent and murdered all the children about Bethlehem, that were but two years old. But God first told Joseph, and bid him fly, with Mary and the child, to Egypt, till Herod's death.

C. What did Christ do when he was a little child?

M. He obeyed his supposed father and his mother, to be an example to all children, to teach them to obey their parents. If he that was God in flesh would obey, how much are all children bound to obedience?

C. But why would Christ become so weak at first, as an infant, and not be made a man first, as Adam was?

M. He that came to redeem all ages, young and old, would sanctify all, by taking both childhood and riper age upon himself, and show us that children are saved by him.

C. How could Christ be our Teacher, King, and Saviour, when he was an infant?

M. The work of our redemption was not to be done all at once, but by degrees and parts. His infant humiliation, next his incarnation, was a part, but the great part was to be done at age, in its proper season. A child may be a king, or a lord, though he cannot do that which a king, or lord, at age, can do. An infant may be the owner of an inheritance, or lands, in right, though he be not capable of knowing or using it. And as Christ was the head of the church in his infancy, so infants may be infant members of it, though they know it not.

C. What did Christ do after, when he came to fuller age?

M. He grew up in wisdom as he grew in age, as to his bodily manner of knowing; and he disputed with the doctors; but he did not openly declare himself to be Christ, and exercise his office, till he was thirty years old.

C. How did he do it then?

M. He was first baptised by John Baptist, who was his har-binger, to show that the kingdom of Christ was now coming, and to prepare the Jews, by preaching, repentance, and baptising the penitent, to be fit receivers of this heavenly King. And God, by a voice from heaven, proclaimed him to be his beloved Son, in whom he was pleased, commanding us to hear him; and the Holy Ghost descended on him visibly, as in the likeness of a dove.

C. What did he when he was baptised?

M. He went into the wilderness, and fasted forty days and nights, as Moses did when he received the law; and then Satan was permitted to tempt him, that if he could have drawn him to any sin he might have hindered our redemption.

C. What did the devil tempt him to?

M. To break God's order, and tempt God, by commanding stones to be made bread, to satisfy his hunger, and to cast himself headlong from a pinnacle of the temple, to show that God could preserve him; and to worship the devil upon promise that he would give him all the kingdoms of the world.

C. How did the devil find any means for such foul temptations?

M. By citing some texts of Scripture falsely perverted.

C. Did Christ yield to any of his temptations?

M. No; he never sinned in thought, word, or deed.

C. How did Christ answer the tempter?

M. By Scripture, rightly alleged; and, at last, by detesting his motions, and commanding him to be gone.

C. Why would Christ be tempted to such odious sins?

M. The world was overthrown, and Paradise lost, by the devil's overcoming Eve and Adam by his temptations: and Christ, that came to recover sinful man, was to conquer the tempter, who, by temptation, had conquered man.

C. What did Christ after that?

M. He went abroad preaching to sinners, to prepare them, by repentance, to believe that the promised Redeemer was come, and joyfully to receive the heavenly King that came to save them. And before he told them that he was the Christ, he

proved it by his works, going about to do that which none could do, but by the power of God. He healed the blind, the lame, the palsy, the lepers, and all diseases, by his bare word or touch. He did, by command, heal those that were mad and possessed by devils. He raised the dead to life again; and then he declared that he was the Christ. And he sent forth twelve chosen chief messengers, and seventy other disciples, to preach the same doctrine, and to work such miracles as he had done; which they did.

C. And how was he received; did they believe him?

M. The multitude admired him, and cried him up, and followed him to see his miracles, and to be healed of their diseases: but none but those that were ordained to eternal life did so believe in him, as to forsake their sin, and to be saved; for he came to preach repentance and holiness.

C. Who were they that believed him not?

M. Especially the rulers, and great men, and priests, and Sadducees; and next the wicked sort of the rabble.

C. Why were the rulers and priests against him?

M. The Roman empire had conquered the Jews, and ruled over them, and were the most powerful in the world; and Christ was called the King of the Jews, because he came to be their Saviour; and they thought that if the Romans did but hear of a king risen up among them, they would send their armies and destroy them: and the common people, seeing Christ's miracles, would have made him a king, but that he refused it, and therefore the rulers plotted to kill him.

C. And how did they use him at last?

M. The priests and the rabble joined together to persuade Pilate, the Roman governor, to put him to death: and they called him a blasphemer, because he told them that he was the Son of God. And when Pilate told them he found no fault in him, they cried out with rage, instead of reason, "Crucify him, crucify him!" And when they could no otherwise prevail with Pilate, they told him that if he did not crucify Christ, he was an enemy to Cæsar, the Roman emperor, whom the Jews were subject to, because Christ called himself the King of the Jews. And then Pilate durst forbear no longer, but judged him to be crucified.

And then when he was in their power, King Herod, and the soldiers, and the rabble, abused and scorned him, and put a crown of thorns on his head, and a purple robe on him, and a

reed in his hand, as a sceptre, and bowed to him in scorn, and blindfolded him and struck him, and bid him read who struck him; and after much scorn and scourging they crucified him.

C. What is crucifying?

M. It was the manner of the Romans putting malefactors to death, like our hanging men. They set in the ground a long piece of timber, and nailed a cross piece near the top; and they nailed men's hands, spread out on the cross-bar, and the feet to the lower part of the upright piece, that they might so hang in pain till they died: and so they did by Jesus, writing over his head "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

C. What did his disciples do, when they saw him hanged on a cross?

M. Peter himself denied him, and foreswore him, and the rest forsook him and fled, save that John and his mother, and some women, or few others, stood mourning by him.

C. I doubt if I had seen him crucified and dead, I should not have believed that he was the Son of God?

M. But what, if you had seen the proof that followed? He was crucified between two thieves. One of them reviled him; and so did the people, for not saving himself that had saved others; but the other was converted, and believed in Christ, and prayed him to remember him when he came into his kingdom; and Christ promised him, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." And as he hung on the cross, the sun was darkened, the earth trembled, the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom, and many dead bodies rose, and appeared to many.

C. It is wonder, then, that they did not all believe?

M. The captain of the guard of soldiers was convinced; but a wicked, hardened heart resisteth reason and sense.

C. What did they, then, with the body of Jesus?

M. Two of the rulers, that had secretly believed him, now owned him, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus. And Joseph begged his body of Pilate, and buried it in a grave hewn in stone, in a garden, which he had prepared for himself; and they wrapped the body with spices, to keep it.

C. What day of the week died Christ?

M. On a Friday, so called now, that is, the fifth day; on the yearly day commonly called Good Friday.

C. What became of him after this?

M. His soul went to Paradise, and to —, that is, among

departed souls, and his body lay in the grave till the third day, which was the first day of the week, now commonly called Sunday. And then he rose from the dead, of which I shall speak to you the next time.

C. But could not Christ have saved himself from death?

M. Yes: very easily, as he saved others. But he came into the world on purpose to die, and not only to die, but to suffer in his soul the greater pain of the displeasure and justice of God, for the sins of man, which he voluntarily undertook to bear: of which I must also further teach you, but will not load you with too much at once.

The Nineteenth Lesson.—The History of Christ's Resurrection, and his Commission to the Apostles, and his Ascension.

C. When did Christ rise again from the dead?

M. Early in the morning, on the first day of the week, now called, by Christians, the Lord's day; which is kept in remembrance of it ever since.

C. How did Christ rise?

M. His Godhead was Almighty, and his soul, which was in Paradise, by and with his Godhead, again entered into his body.

C. How was his rising known?

M. Because Christ had often told them that he would rise again the third day, the rulers set a seal on the stone that was at the entrance of the sepulchre, and set a guard to watch it. And an angel came and frightened away the soldiers, and rolled away the stone; and the rulers hired the soldiers to say, that Christ's disciples came by night and stole him away, while they were asleep, and the people believed this.

C. Who saw him when he was risen?

M. First Mary Magdalene, and some other women; and after, five hundred at once, on a mountain in Galilee. And he oft appeared to his disciples, on the first days of each week, when they were met with doors shut on them. And Thomas once being absent, he told the rest that he would not believe it, unless he saw the wound in his side, (which the soldiers had made with a spear,) and those in his hands and feet, and might put his finger into them. And the next time he bid Thomas come and put his finger into his side, and wounds, and not be faithless, but believing. And Thomas cried out, "My Lord and my God!" At another time, he appeared to two of them on the

way, and opened to them the old Scripture, which foretold his sufferings, and his glory.

And another time he came to them at the seaside where they were fishing, and brought a huge draught of great fishes into their net, and then did eat with them on the shore.

C. How long stayed he on earth when he was risen ?

M. Forty days ; from Easter day to Ascension day.

C. What did he all that while on earth ?

M. He appeared to men, not constantly, but at certain times : and before he went, he gave his apostles their commission what to do when he was gone.

C. What were they appointed to do ?

M. To go as far as they could into all the world, and preach the gospel to all nations, and to make them Christ's disciples, and to baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And, having baptised them, to teach them to observe all that he had commanded them, and live after his laws.

C. What is baptising ?

M. It is a solemn covenant made between God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and him that is baptised ; which is signified by washing the person with water.

C. How were they washed ?

M. The minister brought them to some water, and dipped them over head, and then they rose up : which was to signify that they trusted in Christ, that had been dead and buried, and risen again : and that they did now, by covenant, become as dead men to the world, and to their fleshly, sinful life, and did enter upon a new life of faith and holiness, [in] hope of heaven.

C. Must they be so baptised now ?

M. They must be so washed to the same signification and covenant : but the same quantity of water, and dipping over head is not necessary in our cold country, where it may destroy life, as was used in that hot country where it was a pleasure : for it is the washing, and signification, and covenant, that is necessary ; and God will have mercy rather than sacrifice and outward ceremony.

C. What is the covenant that is made by baptism ?

M. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, doth consent and promise to the baptised, to be his God and Father, his Saviour, and his Sanctifier and Comforter, if he will consent, unfeignedly

and practically, so to take him; and forsaking the devil, the world, and the flesh, so far as they are against him, will consent to live in faith, love, and holy obedience, to him; in which he will strengthen him, and will forgive his sin, and give him an everlasting life of blessedness in heaven.

C. Were little children to be baptised?

M. Yes, if the parents were baptised Christians, and, desiring it, did dedicate them to God in Christ: for nations were to be made disciples, and baptised; and children are parts of nations.

C. What did Christ after the forty days on earth?

M. He ascended up into heaven.

C. How did he go up?

M. By the power of his Godhead, in the sight of his disciples. He called them together, and gave them his commands and his blessing, and promised to send down the Holy Ghost on them and on other believers, and to enable them to speak those languages (to propagate the gospel) which they had never learned; and to work miracles, to confirm their doctrine and testimony of Christ. And he commanded them to stay at Jerusalem till the Holy Ghost was sent down upon them. And then he went bodily to heaven, while they looked up and gazed after him: and an angel stood by them, and said, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus shall come again as you have seen him go."

C. But did Christ ever come again?

M. That is to be done at the end of this world, when Christ shall come to judgment.

C. Did Christ take up his body that he had on earth?

M. Yes: but it is changed from corruptible flesh into a spiritual, incorruptible, glorious body.

C. And what doth Christ do now in heaven?

M. He is above all angels and men, the Lord of all, and all power is given to him to gather and save his elect, and to subdue his enemies, and punish the ungodly.

C. Why did Christ stay forty days before he ascended up?

M. To leave men a full proof that he was risen.

C. But why did he not show himself to all the Jews, as well as to his disciples?

M. We must take heed of asking God a reason of his doings: he doth all things in perfect wisdom, but maketh not us his counsellors, or judges, of his doings. But we may conceive that

the malignant, self-cursed Jews were unworthy and unfit to be the witnesses of his resurrection : and seeing the witnesses of it were to be sent abroad through the world, to testify what they had seen themselves, none were so fit for this office as those that had been with him, and heard his doctrine, and seen his miracles, and by sanctification were fitted to be his messengers, and by self-denial and patience to propagate his saving gospel to the world.

Chapter Twenty.—Of the coming down of the Holy Spirit, and the Works of the Apostles thereby.

C. What is that Holy Ghost that Christ promised to send down ?

M. He is the Spirit of God the Father, and the Son, sent to do those strange works on men which no man or angel was able to do, to fit men to further their own and other men's salvation, and propagate the grace and kingdom of Christ in the world.

C. What were those strange gifts and works ?

M. The Holy Spirit filled them with a lively belief of that they were to preach : and brought all to their remembrance that Christ had taught them, and taught the apostles infallibly that which they were to deliver as Christ's truth, by word or writing to the world. And he enabled them to speak the languages which they had never learned, that they might be able to preach to men of divers languages and nations. And to convince all men that they were sent by God, they had the gift of doing miracles, to heal the sick, and lame, and blind, and raise the dead to life again. And with these gifts they were sent to preach the gospel to the world.

C. Could they heal all the sick, and raise all the dead ?

M. No : but the same Holy Spirit that gave them the power, told them when to use it : it was not to be common, nor at their own will ; but when God, by miracles, would have unbelievers convinced, that would not be convinced by other means, and so Christ and his gospel proved to be true.

C. Had not good men the Spirit of God before ?

M. Yes, in a lower measure, agreeable to that measure of means that God then afforded them : but they had this eminent, extraordinary gift of the Spirit, which Christ gave after his ascension, for the proof and success of his gospel.

C. When and how did they receive this gift of the Spirit ?

M. On the Lord's day, which we call Whitsunday, when all the believers were assembled to worship God, suddenly a noise, like a rushing, mighty wind from heaven, filled all the house; and there appeared like cloven tongues of fire, and sat upon each of them, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance, the works and praise of God: so that the people of many nations that were then at Jerusalem, wondered to hear them speak in all their several languages.

C. Did this convince the Jews?

M. The most of the priests and rulers were hardened, and believed not: but Peter made a speech to them to prove that this miraculous gift of the Spirit was sent from Christ as the witness to his word: and three thousand were converted, and were baptised that day.

C. What more did the apostles do to prove the gospel to be true?

M. There was a poor man born lame, and had so lived above forty years, that was carried to beg at the gate of the temple, and he asked an alms of Peter and John, that were going in to prayer. And the Spirit of God moved Peter to say, "In the name of Jesus, stand up and walk;" and he was presently healed, and walked, and leaped, praising God: and the people wondering, Peter preached another sermon to them, and the converts were then five thousand.

C. Did not this convert the rulers and priests?

M. No: but being in a rage to see so many converted, they laid hold on the apostles, and the next day examined them, by what power they did this miracle: and when Peter told them that it was by the name of Jesus, they knew not what to say, but commanded them to preach Christ no more.

C. And did they obey them, and give over preaching?

M. No: but they came to the rest of the believers, and gave God thanks for his wonders of mercy. And the Holy Ghost again fell on the hearers, and they magnified and praised God. And they went on preaching, and the rulers put them in prison, and the angel of God opened the prison doors, and let them out, and bid them go and preach in the temple; which they did.

C. Did not this convince them?

M. No: they did but rage the more, and threatened the Apostles for preaching, when they forbade them; and were

plotting to kill them ; but one of them, Gamaliel, stopped them, by telling them what it is to fight against God.

C. But did none believe them after these miracles ?

M. Yes, those whose hearts God changed ; many thousands joined with the apostles as a church, in their doctrine and communion and prayer : and were, by the Spirit, so filled with love, that they sold their inheritances, and brought the money to the apostles, and all lived and fed together on the common stock : and no one called any thing his own.

C. But what did they when the stock was spent ?

M. This was not to continue ; but to show the power of the Spirit of love at first. God, that moved them to it, knew that they would quickly be persecuted out of the land, and could not carry their inheritance away with them.

C. Were all willing thus to part with their estates ?

M. God made them willing by love : but one called Ananias, and his wife, Sapphira, brought but part that they sold their land for, and lied, and said, that it was all : and, by the Spirit of God, Peter pronounced the sentence of death on them for lying, and thinking that the Holy Ghost in the apostles knew it not ; and for keeping that which they took on them to devote to God.

C. Did not this frighten men from being Christians ?

M. It frightened men from being hypocrites, and from coming with a false, divided heart. But the good that the apostles did, drew abundance the more to them.

C. What was that good they did ?

M. They rejoiced sinners with the glad tidings of pardon and salvation by Christ ; and they healed them of all diseases : insomuch that men carried the sick on the beds and couches into the streets, that at least the shadow of Peter, passing by, might overshadow them ; and multitudes of the sick, and possessed with devils, were brought out of other cities about ; and they were healed every one. And men love their bodies so well, that this turned to the good of their souls, and winning them to believe.

C. What did the apostles next ?

M. They made seven good men deacons, to distribute the church's stock, and take care of the poor. And one of these, called Stephen, was full of the Holy Ghost, and confounded the unbelievers, by proving the truth of Christ ; which filled them so full of rage, that they brought false witness against him, as for

blasphemy, and stoned him to death : and this was the first martyr that was killed for the faith of Christ.

C. How did he die ?

M. Praying for his murderers that God " would not lay that sin to their charge," (that is, not so as to deny them repentance, and the further tenders of his grace,) and he prayed the Lord Jesus to receive his spirit. For before they killed him, he saw heaven opened, and Christ sitting on the right hand of God : no wonder, then, that he died with joy.

C. Who were they that did this cruel murder ?

M. One of the leaders of this malignant rabble was Saul ; who did not stop here, but went on to persecute the rest ; and make havoc of the church, and entering into every house, haled out men and women, and committed them to prison : and so scattered the Christians from Jerusalem into other parts.

C. What did they when they were driven away from Jerusalem ?

M. They went abroad several ways, preaching the gospel. Philip went to Samaria, the chief city of the ten tribes, where were a mongrel sort of erroneous Jews ; where he so preached, that the generality of the city gave heed to him, and after were baptised as believers, both men and women ; for his miracles convinced them : he cast out devils from many that were possessed by them ; and he healed palsies, lameness, and other diseases, and convinced Simon that had bewitched them.

C. Who was that Simon ?

M. He was a famous wizard, that, by the power of the devil, had done such strange things among them, that they called him the great power of God, and were commonly deluded by him.

And when he saw the miracles of Philip, he himself believed, and was baptised as a Christian ; but yet his heart was false, and not truly converted and sanctified.

C. How was that known ?

M. Though Philip, that was but a deacon, and many others, worked miracles, yet God made it a special gift to the apostles, that, by laying on of their hands, the Holy Ghost should be given to others, to enable them to work miracles. And when the Samaritans believed, Peter and John came to them, and laid their hands on them with prayer, and they had presently this miraculous gift of the Holy Ghost. And when Simon the conjuror saw this, he wondered, and offered them

money, if they would give him the power to give the Holy Ghost to others, which showed a proud, ungodly heart.

C. And what answer did they give him ?

M. Peter said to him, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God might be bought with money;" and he told him that his heart was not right, and that he had no part in that matter ; but for all his believing and baptism, he was yet in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, and bid him repent and pray, if, perhaps, he might be forgiven. And Simon being afraid of this threatening, entreated them to pray for him, lest it should fall upon him. And thus the great city Samaria joyfully received the christian faith.

C. What other miracles followed this ?

M. When Philip had converted the Samaritans, an angel of God bid him go toward the South, for further work, which God had thus to do. There was a great man that was a treasurer to a queen of Ethiopia, who, being a proselyte, had been worshipping at Jerusalem, and going home, was reading in his chariot part of Isaiah liii., which is a prophecy of Christ's sufferings, but understood it not : and God bid Philip go to him and teach him. And the great man took Philip into his chariot, and Philip expounded it to him, and preached Christ to him, and he was converted, and baptized.

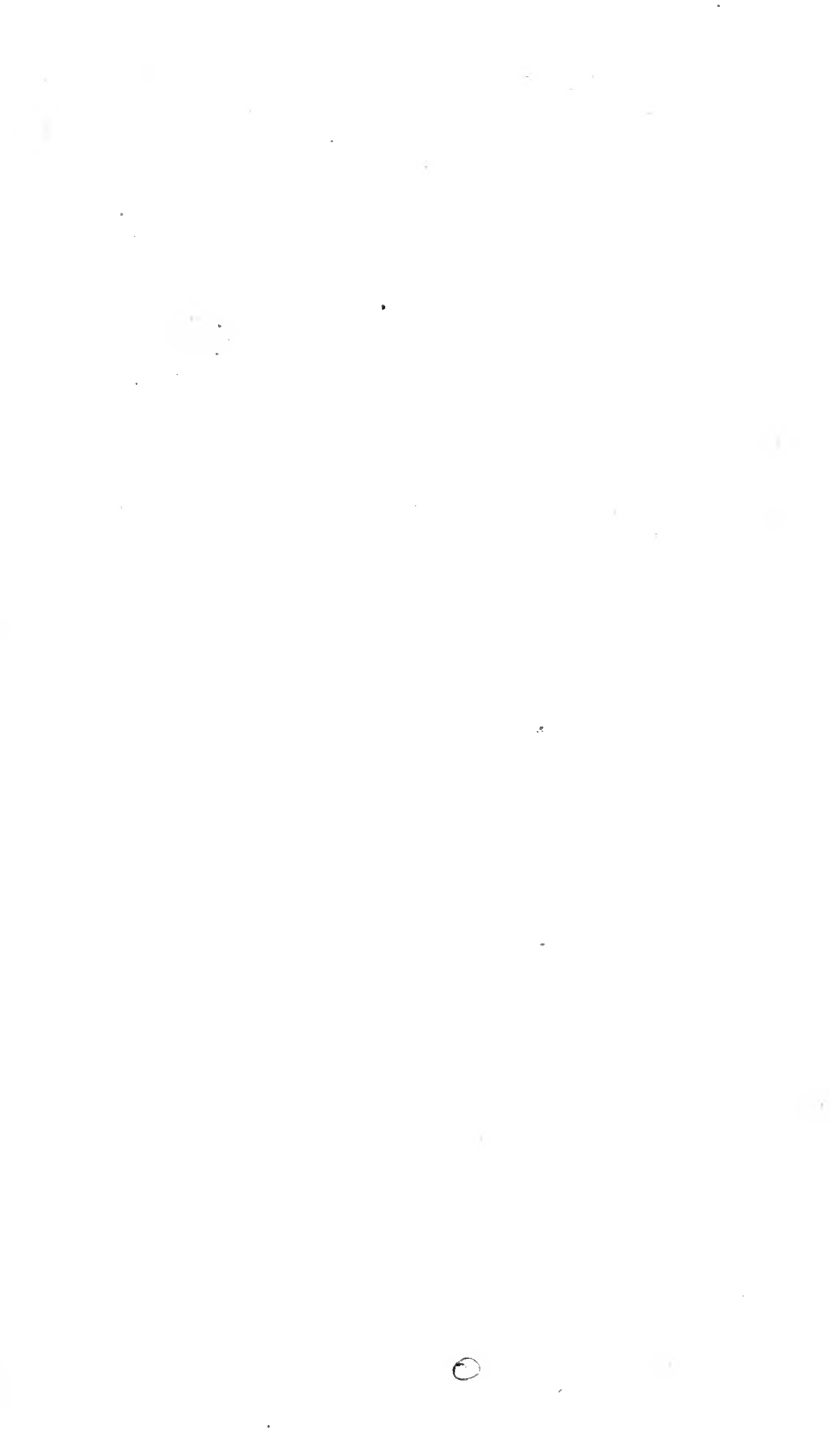
C. But what became of bloody Saul, that persecuted the Church ?

M. Oh ! God made him the greatest example of his mercy that ever was heard of; while he raged against the church in his blind zeal, he was not content to drive them from Jerusalem, but he got letters from the high priest to pursue them to Damascus, the chief city of Syria, and to bring them bound to Jerusalem; but as he journeyed and came near to Damascus, (a famous city in Syria,) suddenly, at midday, a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shone round about him; whereupon he fell to the earth, and he heard a voice (but they who were with him only heard the noise) saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Saul, trembling and astonished, said, "Who art thou, Lord?" And, being informed that it was Jesus of Nazareth whom he was persecuting, by this same Jesus he was ordered to arise, and to go into the city, (Damascus,) where he should know more. He, lodging there, in the street called Straight, in the house of Judas, remained blind

three days, fasting and praying. Thither the Lord, in a vision, sent Ananias, a disciple at Damascus, who, having heard of Saul's fury, and errand to Damascus from the high priest, was loth to go, till better satisfied by the Lord concerning him. But when he understood that Christ had fixed on him to be a chosen vessel to himself for extraordinary service, he goes to Saul; and telling Saul what Christ told him, Saul is baptised by him, and recovers his sight: and, after some days' abode with the disciples at Damascus, he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he was the Son of God: and thenceforward he became the most eminent of Christ's servants and apostles, converting souls, edifying churches, and ordering things and persons to their greatest advantage: and his Lord all along owned and prospered him, till he at last sealed his doctrine with martyrdom.

But the course of his ministry, the substance of his doctrine, the dates and occasions of his epistles, with their main scope, sense, and force, his sufferings, with his wisdom and behaviour upon all accounts, as the New Testament informs us, require good time, and close thought.

END OF THE EIGHTEENTH VOLUME.



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